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A LOVER'S REVOLT

BY

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A LOVER'S REVOLT

CHAPTER I

BOSTON PACIFICATED

IT was a famous time long past, a time full of wrath, and wrangling, and wretchedness, for man best remembers man when he is a combatant, or a sufferer, or a tormentor.

Boston, which had lately been one of the most glad-some of cities, the most flourishing seaport in Britannia's many colonies, its sixteen thousand indwellers all industrious and thriving, had within a few months assumed the glory of the martyr at the stake.

It was a very different Boston from the one now visible. The peninsula was but little larger than the Pokanokets had left it, and only about half as large as modern grading, and filling, and wharfing have made it. The straggling town covered three quarters of its picturesque surface; but a great many of the houses had spacious gardens, or even orchards and pasture lots; and there were broad stretches of public or private meadow, especially on the side towards Cambridge. The three hills, much higher and more distinct than we can easily imagine them, were grassy

wastes dotted with wild roses and thickets of bayberry. Beacon Hill really had a beacon, a ponderous pole which bore aloft a large iron skillet for combustibles, a memento of the days when Montcalm and the redskins were terrible to New England.

The public buildings were some fifteen in number. There was Faneuil Hall, the Town Hall, the Court House, the Prison, the Workhouse; and there were ten houses of worship, nearly all Congregational in creed,—the creed of Naseby and Worcester, of Cromwell and the regicides. Was there yet any Ironside virtue left in it? The dwellings were mostly of wood; but many of them were roomy, comfortable, and graced with some fretwork or pointing of decoration; a dozen or so had imported furniture, libraries, family portraits. Few burghers in that day lived more grandly than John Hancock and James Bowdoin (those earliest yet even now most notable of Beacon Hill aristocrats) both of whom looked out from their diamond-paned windows upon the Common, and perhaps turned loose upon it their swine and cows, like the humblest citizen. Along the harbor front, from the Neck quite around to the Charlestown Ferry Way, ran a sinuous curve of wharves, shipyards, and storehouses. For a colonial port the commerce had been great; a yearly clearance of a thousand sail was nothing remarkable.

But why should not Boston succeed in any career of enterprise and intelligence? The stock of the Puritans, hardened by a wrestle of one hundred and fifty years with the wilderness, had rather gained than lost in audacity and vigor. Moreover, every native-born soul could read and write, a circumstance without parallel in the mother country, and perhaps without

parallel in all arrogant Europe. It was a question whether civilization had not crossed the Atlantic, and left barbarism to hold the cities and hamlets of the elder shores.

But it was hard times, during that spring of 1775, in thrifty, church-going, school-attending Boston. For ten months General Thomas Gage, with a dozen battalions and as many frigates at his beck, had been royal satrap of Massachusetts and its capital. For rather more than that time the port had been closed by act of Parliament to punish the citizens for refusing to import taxed tea, and for pitching a sample of the same into the harbor. The export and import trade of the town was as dead as George III. and an overwhelming majority of insolent lords and bribed country squires could kill it. The wharves were bare, except of government transports; the half-finished vessels in the shipyards were turning yellow; the doors of the warehouses were locked from morning till night. The shopkeepers in the business streets sat on their counters, drumming a sort of dead march with the heels of their foxy shoes, and dismally waiting for the rare customers who bought so sparingly and paid so irregularly.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of industriously minded burghers were at their wits' ends for means to live from day to day. Hungry-looking men in ragged clothing sauntered the forlorn streets, vainly seeking a job which might bring forth sixpence to pay for dinner and lodging. There were women as shabby as the men, and many children more shabby than either, even to going barefoot in the surly April weather. The well-to-do class was living stintingly on its capital, and

the laboring class was living on the chance mercies of Heaven.

One fiery consolation remained within the reach of almost every one. West India rum could be had for sixpence a quart, and New England rum for four-pence. Men who did not know where they could get trusted for food on the morrow, sought forgetfulness from despair in this abundance of potable ruin. But the quiet tippling of decent householders and the noisy public fuddling of jobless wagoners and shipless sailors were not the most disturbing features of the wide-spread and increasing ineptitude.

The soldiers of the garrison, meanly fed as most soldiers then were, miserably quartered also, and suffering from typhoid fever, seized every opportunity to drown in rum the consciousness of their monotonous discomfort. The dozen regiments were perhaps the drunkenest regiments that ever staggered about an equal space of their Maker's footstool. Grenadiers, and light infantry, and linesmen, and marines, and tarpaulins lurched through the woe-begone town, challenging citizens to fisticuffs, breaking up the games of schoolboys, and making wrecks of each other's visages. A thousand noses had bled, and a thousand pairs of eyes had gone into mourning, since Gage had undertaken to pacify Boston. The very officers were sometimes afraid to enter the clamorous barracks, or to meet the hullabalooing truants therefrom who shouledered along the muddy streets.

¹ But British discipline was not yet entirely submerged by the raging deluge of cheap rum. It was the epoch of Prussian drill, when every army emulated the methods of the great Frederic, and every soldier learned his

duty at the cost of his carcass. As Voltaire relates of Candide, "They made him right face and left face, they made him shoulder arms and order arms, and they gave him thirty lashes."

Every week Boston saw a squad of red-nosed heroes marched out upon the Common, where they were stripped to the waist in the raw east wind, and cat-o'-nine-tailed by burly drummers, the blood spitting from their quivering backs and crimsoning the boggy turf. Three hundred lashes was the usual quota, and the grim sergeant-major sometimes counted off a thousand. Naturally a large proportion of these corrections fell to the lot of the warm-hearted battalions which had been recruited among the "wild Irish."

In short, Boston was not a cheerful place to walk about in, much less to abide in. Many citizens had emigrated, some in search of labor and bread, some to avoid a hasty jailing. John Hancock, the rich man, and Samuel Adams, the eloquent man, were in hiding at Lexington, lest they should be arrested for having been elected as delegates to a General Congress of the provinces. Joseph Warren, another brilliant advocate of "English liberties for Englishmen living in America," was prepared to fly the city at a moment's notice. Even the Tories, while meekly revering the "anointed of the Lord," did not thoroughly admire General Gage's pacification when they looked upon the empty port, the closed shops, the trafficless streets, the numerous beggars, the universal impoverishment. Probably their greatest present satisfaction sprang from squabbling with their comrades in affliction.

For, like all abodes of torment, whether in this world or another, Boston was full of hate and recrimi-

nation. In every street, and in many a household, there were two angrily discordant parties. The children of liberal parties and the children of ministerial families rarely met without exchanging surly looks and evil names, or perhaps brickbats. Ladies who drank loyal bohea tea were not on speaking terms with ladies who drank tea made from the leaves of the as yet untaxed raspberry. There were relatives who gobbled their mush and milk without glancing at each other, and huffed off to bed without bidding each other good-night. Members of the church glowered sourly over the communion-cup at brothers and sisters in Christ. Whenever news came that a tax-collector had been tarred and feathered, four fifths of Boston smiled; and whenever an imprudently active "Son of Liberty" was calabooosed, the other fifth lifted eyes of gratitude to a Tory Providence. The loyalists besieged the throne of grace to have Sam Adams and John Hancock jailed or hung for high treason; and the Whigs prayed with equal fervor that Lord Chatham and Colonel Barré might get the majority in Parliament.

Even General Gage, an honest admirer of vigorous soldierly ways in statesmanship, could not be happy among people who were perpetually boring him with the British constitution, and representing to him that that was the code by which they wanted to be governed. He got so confounded by their talk that he openly grumbled at a certain statute of Parliament, and said it was the unwiseest possible regulation for a city "where everybody studied law." He wanted to leave Boston and return to New York, where his American wife's family could make things socially pleasant for him, and where the population was not

yet grimly bent upon having "English rights." In short nobody in the pacificated town was happy, unless it might be the soldiers who were stone-blind drunk and not yet able to take up the goose-step for the whipping-post.

All this wrath and misery because a certain man in England—a high-born wooden-head with a pig's forehead and chin, and a stubborn, narrow mind to correspond—had resolved that somewhere or other, if not in Great Britain, then in the colonies, there should be Englishmen who might be taxed without being consulted about it. Also because in those days a crown was still a fetish; because even a prime minister of England went down on his knees to gracious majesty; because arrogant noble lords could be changed into truckling flunkeys by the stare of a self-willed monarch; because ignorant Tory squires could be hired with guineas to pass any measure which did not touch their own pockets; and because Englishmen in general neither knew nor cared what a colonist might be or might want.

CHAPTER II

COLONIAL PACIFICOS

AMONG the few Bostonians who were neither passionately Whig nor passionately Tory were the Oakbridges.

"Things are ruther mixed in my household," said Jehiel Oakbridge, merchant, the head of this worthy family and the senior partner of Oakbridge & Son. "There 's my wife believes in Hancock and Adams. There 's my half-brother, Parson Timothy Fenn—you know he 's just been run out of Tarrytown by the patriots—well, he was a fierce enough ministry man before, but now he 's fiercer than ever. There 's my son's wife, a London-born woman, and naturally all for the old country. And there 's Huldy, sometimes one way, sometimes the other. John and I have all we can do to hold our tongues. We attend to business; that seems to be our part. I wish there was more of it to 'tend to."

Then the customer departed, having bought little and paid nothing, like so many others. Half an hour passed without another creature entering the "store," except a stray country dog who had lost his master and was searching the town for him.

"We may as well lock up, John, and go to dinner," said the elder Oakbridge. "The women folks will

want us to be dressed up nice today. Birthday dinners! That's your wife's nonsense, John. I don't believe there ever was a birthday dinner before in Boston, unless it was in some Episcopal family."

"Ann can't help being fond of English ways," was John's apology for his wife.

"I would n't mind so much, if they had n't invited that English officer," the elder man continued. "What will Ash Farnlee think? He had my permission to speak to Huldy to-day."

"We do a good deal of trade with the garrison," John suggested. "This officer is in General Gage's retinue. It won't hurt to be polite to him."

They had not far to go to reach their home. The Oakbridge store was but a wing of the Oakbridge dwelling. This dwelling was not one of the grand houses of Boston, but it was far from being one of the meaner sort. It was a sufficiently spacious building, puritanically plain and rectangular, with a hall down the centre and two rooms on either side. One of the front rooms was the parlor, a peculiarly sacred apartment, scarcely ever opened; the other served as the family sitting-room, and, on special occasions, as dining-room; for, as a rule, the simple but abundant table of the Oakbridges was spread in the kitchen. The remainder of the ground floor was occupied by the kitchen, the lean-to wash-house, and the dormitory of the heads of the family. Naturally the building was of wood, coated with hand-made chestnut shingles painted white. The front door was sheltered by a pillared porch, two stories high, and terminating aloft in a projecting gable,—the single picturesque feature of the Calvinistic edifice.

There had been great excitement among the female Oakbridges over this dinner which was to celebrate Huldah's eighteenth birthday. It was not because Asahel Farnlee (son of Squire Farnlee of Lexington) would be present. Much as Huldah liked him, she knew him familiarly as an admirer, and she was not afraid of him. But Captain Moorcastle would be there, a comparative stranger, a native of the old country, an officer, and, after some hazy fashion, a noble.

"I'm scairt already, Sister Ann," Huldah had confided to John Oakbridge's wife, as they were talking over the coming banquet, two days before. "I ain't used to lords yet."

"Oh, 'e 'ain't got no title," said Ann, cheeringly. "'E 'ain't even a barnet. But if 'is cousin dies without children, hup goes the young man into the peeritch. Don't call him a lord, for gracious sake. Call him Capting."

Sister Ann looked forward with anxiety, but also with much hope, to the dinner. It had been all of her doing, the festivity itself, the invitation to Ash Farnlee, and the invitation to Captain Moorcastle. She trusted that the presence of the provincial admirer would sting the Englishman with jealousy and inspire him to love. If her handsome little sister-in-law should bag a British officer, who was also an honorable, and might become an earl, what joy unspeakable, what abounding glory, even to her lowly self, Ann Elizar Bodge, native of 'Ighgate!

Well, the prandial day had come, and they were still alive, though hardly. Both the young women had had their white arms in flour up to the elbows.

Sister Ann had concocted a beefsteak pie, a Yorkshire pudding, a plum pudding, and other British indiges-tibilities. Also there would be oysters, roast turkey, mince pies, tarts, madeira wine, French brandy, and unlimited native cider, if called for. Let us all hope that the noble guest's heart will be softened by so many appeals to his tenderest sensibilities.

And now the honorable Captain is at the gate. Huldah and Sister Ann peep from behind the window curtain while he alights on the timber horse-block and sends away his steed in charge of the attendant orderly. Meanwhile Jehiel Oakbridge, in his claret-colored coat, yellow waistcoat, yellow knee-breeches, yellow silk stockings and silver-buckled shoes, stumbles eagerly to the door, and welcomes the guest whose company he had not desired. His daughter was ashamed of him for being so flurried, and yet she was fully as frightened herself.

Captain Moorcastle was a splendid spectacle, in his long-skirted and broad-skirted scarlet coat, with its black velvet facings and abundant gold-lace trimmings, his tight-fitting knee-breeches and long cavalry boots. Moreover he had a distinguished air, and a well-proportioned figure of sufficient height, and a face which was rather handsome, if not always agreeable. There was an aristocratic cut to the very nearly Grecian features. There was a lordly arrogance in the stare of the wide-open dark-brown eyes. The spirited upper lip was a little too short, for it sometimes exposed a considerable length of white front teeth, and then the mouth had a wolfish expression. The complexion was darkling, and saturated with a uniform sombre redness, which seemed to denote an iron constitution

and an impassioned temperament. Here and there, also, as was common enough among the men of those bibulous days, the skin was undershot with turbidities of overheated blood, as if it might shortly burgeon forth in port-wine buds and brandy blossoms.

The Captain's fashion of entrance was not what we would now describe as English. It was not quiet, and natural, and unpretentious even unto shyness. Quite the contrary, it was oppressively full of manner, and it was hectoringly pompous. The honorable young staff-officer behaved in a style which would disgust his representative of the present day. He grinned, and grimaced, and bridled, and strutted. He bowed to the right and left with the flourishes of a dancing-master. And he let his entertainers know, even while he mouthed his compliments at them, that he was speaking a long way down to them and doing them an honor. In short, he bore himself like a grand gentleman, as gentility was then understood in England.

"I have the plezhr," he mumbled, as he bowed and smirked to one after another of the provincial household. "Great plezhr in being one of your society on this auspicious occasion. Very monstrous plezhr, 'pon m' soul, assure ye."

General Gage could not have behaved better, and General Prescott would not have behaved half so well, meaning to say in a colonial family.

Presently, by the blessing of Heaven, they were all got alive to table. Mrs. Oakbridge, a heroic woman among the serious trials of life, could not for days afterward remember those moments without gasping. Young Farnlee was not waited for, for the simple reason that he was totally forgotten. Reverend Mr.

Fenn, sitting opposite the gorgeous Englishman, said grace in a voice of deep emotion, as though he were surely in the presence of his Creator.

There were seven diners, the high-born guest, Oakbridge and wife, Uncle Fenn and Huldah, Oakbridge junior and wife, leaving an empty chair for Farnlee. Nothing was said about this void, although the Captain glanced at it with an air of grim inquiry, perhaps fearing lest it might be filled by the clerk or the stable boy. But he was quite at his ease and disposed to make himself agreeable.

"Gad! you Bostonians know how to live," he said, nodding approbation at his oyster soup. "Our fellows joke a good deal about your codfish patties and your pork and beans. But what do they know of your *cuisine*? There's such a general spirit of rebellion here that really the officers seldom get a meal outside of their messes. Now it's not the same thing at all in New York. Good subjects there; plenty of invitations out; a much pleasanter station than this rebel hole."

Yes, he was quite at ease in his unconscious arrogance, and quite sure that everybody present found his talk delightful.

But what is the matter with our worthy Bostonians? They can hardly respond to the gallant Captain's gentilities; and when they do speak, it is in broken, simpering murmurs. They represent the colony in face of the mother country. They are cowed by an Englishman, cowed by the royal uniform, cowed by the thought of lordly blood. In the bearing of these good people there is all the reverence of the province for the birthland, and no little of the immemorial flunkeyism of the race toward nobility.

Oakbridge, the honest and solvent man of business, is too much dashed to do otherwise than nod and grin, even when Boston is called a hole. His pious and brave wife, though she has a red spot of insurrection in her cheek, is scared into silence. Torified Uncle Fenn, ducking his silver head, and revealing his fawning old teeth, is venerably contemptible. Of course it is natural that home-born Sister Ann should wriggle and smirk the loyalism and social sycophancy of inmost Highgate. Huldah bears herself best of all, for she remembers a right-honorable squeeze upon her lovely fingers, and she is aware that even General Gage, son of Viscount Gage and commander in chief, has espoused a colonial damsel.

The English-speaking world of our day knows little of the toadyism of the good old times. If we should journey to Halifax and watch Canadian girls truckling to officers of the garrison, we should see nothing like the obsequiousness of bygone Yankeedom to the gentleman from the old country, especially when he bore a uniform or a title. It was high time, in that year of Seventeen Seventy-Five, it was more than abundantly high time, for the good of the American race and the honor of human nature, that we should cut loose from aristocratic, dominating Britain.

The oysters had just been cleared away by a colored bondwoman (less slavish to her owner than was Uncle Fenn to Captain Moorcastle) when Asahel Farnlee entered the dining room. He was a tall, muscular youngster with high-colored cheeks, curling raven hair, and brave, steady, black eyes. His face showed astonishment and disappointment as he stared at the uniformed guest. Every one of the Oakbridges changed

color at sight of that glance of reproachful surprise. Huldah, blushing profusely, started up, and then sat down again, begging Captain Moorcastle's pardon. Mrs. Oakbridge rallied first, and called out in her gentle, measured voice, "We are glad to see you, Asahel, and there is your chair."

When Farnlee had taken his place he was on Huldah's left, while Moorcastle was on her right. Uncle Fenn solemnly introduced them, and the two gentlemen acknowledged each other across the girl's lovely little nose, the provincial only half rising to bow, and the officer returning a rather surly nod. The scene somewhat resembled the mutual salutations of two mastiffs over a bone.

Oakbridge senior sought to make things pleasanter by talking to Ash about his father. Was the Squire putting in a large crop this year? Was there much lawing going on at Lexington? The young man answered with an obvious attempt to pay attention and to appear at ease. Presently he stole a sidelong glance at Huldah, but she was intently listening to Captain Moorcastle, and he relapsed into an unhappy silence.

By this time the Yorkshire pudding and the beefsteak pie were on the table, reminding one of English garrisons in a Yankee province.

"Bravo!" cried the Captain. "How happy could I be with either, were t' other dear charmer away. By Jove (excuse me, Mistress Oakbridge), this is merry old England, and not Boston. Pardon me if I consider this a personal attention. To whom am I indebted?"

Sister Ann tittered and wriggled significantly, and Huldah glanced at her with a sharp pang of jealousy. John Oakbridge felt prouder of his wife at that moment

than he had any profound reason to beat any moment.

"She keeps her English hand at cooking, sir," he said to Moorcastle.

"May she never lose it," prayed Uncle Fenn. "Anything English and everything English is to me sacred."

But the Captain was not to be drawn into any courtliness towards Sister Ann. He had recognized, in his first glance at her, that she was a fundamentally common Englishwoman; and if there was anything that he despised more than he despised colonists, it was the plainer sort of his fellow-islanders. So he simply gave Sister Ann a familiar nod (such as he might have granted to a serviceable barmaid) and turned himself to discourse with the more refined, as well as prettier, Yankee maiden.

"And what do *you* think of English things?" he asked with a confident smile which would have been pleasant enough but for its revelation of pitiless ivories.

"Oh! I—a-dore them," Huldah gasped. Then she wondered if Asahel were looking at her, and how he looked.

"Oh, come now!" grinned the Captain. "That's too good to be believed. How can I dare be so happy as to believe it?"

"Oh, you *must*," cried Huldah. "I insist that you *must* believe me."

She caught her mother gazing at her gravely, and then glancing anxiously toward Farnlee; but she did not care at the moment what either of them thought of her; they were not English, and they wore no epaulets.

"You must tell him, Uncle Fenn, to believe me,"

she giggled on, with a readiness and audacity which astonished herself.

Uncle Fenn, who was simpering like a Chinese Joss, opened his bootlicking mouth and began to say that his niece's loyalty might be implicitly trusted. But the Captain (and one longs to thank him for it) did not look at the old toady, and cut him short in the middle.

"In that case I fill your glass," he said to Huldah; "and I beg leave to drink to your loyal bright eyes."

The roses in Huldah's cheeks turned to peonies. Castles in the clouds, castles in the fogs of old England, rose before her girlish vision. What could she care just then for the provincial lover who sat on her left hand, pale and hollow-eyed with heartache?

Farnlee comprehended perfectly that courtship was going on there between Huldah and Moorcastle. What was the meaning of it? Why had that girl—inexpressibly dear to him even then—why had she given her whole time to this stranger, listening to him alone, flattering him, manœuvring for his attentions? Had she never cared for himself, Asahel Farnlee, her old intimate, her lover for years? No; that could not be; she had been changed; her head was turned. For the first time he realized the full force of the pitiless fact that a colonist was as the dust of the earth in comparison with a native of the mother country.

The Captain, flushing a little with wine and courtship, continued to monopolize Huldah. He demanded her ear, and her sparkling glances, and her blushes. But he was under no necessity to struggle for her attention. Even when he talked to others, when he vouchsafed a witticism to the company, she hearkened with all her might, and was the first to giggle.

Meanwhile she prattled with an ease which surprised herself, considering the presence of the elders of her household, and the straitness with which she had been trained to revere them. But she felt that she was the heroine of the occasion, and that she was backed up by the sole hero of it, Captain Moorcastle. It really costs one a good deal of trouble to explain how a Yankee damsel of that day could be forward and pert.

After a time Uncle Fenn managed to grovel and fawn his way into the dialogue. He had expected—he the loyalist divine, and martyr of rebellious Tarrytown—to take a leading hand in entertaining Gracious Majesty's noble and gallant servitor. But there was a lively mess-table wit in the Captain which constantly threw the parson off the trail, like a fat old hound stumbling and summersaulting in vain chase of a doubling young rabbit.

Moreover, Uncle Fenn had been partially dumb-founded by the unexpected assurance with which his niece had welcomed Moorcastle's audacious courtship. Thus it was quite late in the repast before he got his loyal tongue well a-wagging. Then, as a matter of course, he talked high-toryism, and not without eloquence and wit.

But it was of no use. The old gentleman could not get the ear and confidence of the company. Nobody felt sure that he had said the right thing until the Captain had uttered his assent. Nobody so much as smiled at his best jokes until the Captain had laughed. Once, when he had made a clever hit at the patriots, and the Captain had failed to even look amused, there was a general and awful silence. It seemed to Huldah as if nobody under the canopy of heaven would ever

dare speak again. In her embarrassment she turned and addressed an awkward word to Farnlee.

"I am afraid," she giggled and bridled, "that you find my left shoulder rather cold."

The phrase was so cruelly true that Ash could not muster voice to answer; and Huldah, judging that he was angry, vengefully resumed her chattering with Moorcastle.

CHAPTER III

A WOUNDED HEART'S REVOLT

JEHIEL OAKBRIDGE saw with grief that a coolness had sprung up between his daughter and the young fellow whom he would have been glad and proud to welcome as his son-in-law.

"We don't often have company, Ash," he whispered. "But this gentleman has favored us in the way of passes, and a dinner seemed about the best way to get even with him."

Then, to divert the youngster's sorrowful soul, he tried to talk to him about his *alma mater*, Harvard College. But the subject was promptly seized upon by Moorcastle, who inquired with astonishment if there was really a college in the province, and suggested that perhaps Oakbridge meant an academy. Thereafter he rehearsed reminiscences of his own university studies, such as fighting bargemen, eating forbidden suppers, and dodging the proctors. The narratives were somewhat startling to Puritan ears, but every one laughed over them except Mrs. Jehiel Oakbridge and Farnlee. The young man, left to silence and his own sorrowful brooding, listened to this sycophantic merriment with a growing bitterness, which, little as he then suspected it, bore a relation to the fate of kingdoms and to the future of humanity.

Ere long his sullenness was aroused to anger. The wine-bibbing Captain had got upon the colonial question, discussing it with the scoffing superficiality of a true English Tory of the period.

"Nobody can tell what these grumblers want," he declared. "Now they roar for this and now for that. I don't believe they know what they want themselves, and we certainly can't tell them, by Jove. I assure you that the whole senseless bow-wow is regarded with great contempt in England. People scarcely know anything about it."

"I believe you are right there, sir," broke in Farnlee, speaking for the first time to the whole company. "I understand from Mr. Josiah Quincy, who has lately returned from London, that the main trouble in this matter is the ignorance of the English concerning the colonies. Colonel Barré told him that one half at least of the English people supposed that the Americans were some kind of blacks."

"Colonel Barré said that?" demanded the Captain, angry at the mere name of Barré. Then he laughed harshly and added: "Well, for once Colonel Barré was right. That's just what we do suppose, by Jove. Why, let me tell you, I was doosidly surprised myself, when we landed over here, to find that you were all white. Why, hang me if I did n't keep saying to myself for two or three days, 'These beggars are as white as I am.' 'Pon me soul that's the fact now, if you care to know it," he concluded, leaning forward to stare laughingly in Farnlee's face.

Two at least of the company echoed the noble young gentleman's merriment. Sister Ann shook in every

fibre of her honest English bulk, and Uncle Fenn nearly went into a bootlicking apoplexy.

Moorcastle, judging that he was making himself agreeable, continued his genialities. "And you see the consequence, don't you, Mr. — excuse me for not remembering your name. You see the inevitable consequence. There you have one reason why we think it so extraordinary impudent on the part of these fellows to be bawling for English liberties. What the doose, you comprehend, have English liberties to do with a pack of blackamoors ?"

The meek flunkeys and sincere Tories who were there present giggled again. Farnlee did not smile; he glanced around the tittering table in angry astonishment; but when he saw Huldah laughing he drooped his head and fell dumb. It was something like Cæsar covering his face when he beheld the dagger of Brutus.

The Captain, having thus settled Farnlee, resumed his review of the situation, and of course soon entered upon affairs military.

"There 'll be no fighting at all," he said jauntily. "Now 'pon me soul, Miss Oakbridge, you need n't be in the least afraid that the cannons will go bang and make you shriek, as I of course hope you would, out of compliment to us fellows in red jackets." (Here Huldah must giggle again, and roll up her eyes at him coquettishly, and wonder if he really meant it; but the Captain was soon talking about some other fellows, who were away back in the woods and swamps, collecting flour and gunpowder.) "Well, now, we don't mind all that a bit, demme if we do,—excuse me, reverend sir." (Uncle Fenn, flattered at being personally addressed, made a gracious inclination and

smiled.) "Because, don't you see," continued the Captain, pouring out for himself a tenth glass of madeira, "you see, whenever the General wants those stores, he will send a battalion and take them. Some time in the summer, when the stores are sufficient to justify the trouble, and when the marching is good, the business will receive attention. Depend upon it, the job will be attended to, 'pon me soul it will, assure ye."

Of course he was romancing. No measurable quantity of madeira could have made him leak headquarter secrets. In part he was amusing himself with his provincial listeners, and in part he was endeavoring to set afloat a misleading report. The expedition to Concord would take place long before summer should come.

Uncle Fenn loudly commended the General's strategy, and prophesied that it would result in victory.

"Pooh!" laughed Moorcastle. "Victory? Why, there won't be a fight. I don't look for a show of resistance. You'll see what these Minute Men are, if their bad luck should ever get them into a skirmish. My belief is (you must excuse me, Mistress Oakbridge; I see that you are something of a Yankee), my positive belief is that those fellows are a pack of cowards, just fit to tar and feather old grannies." (Signs of assent from Parson Fenn, followed by a tremor and flush of confusion, the word "granny" being unflattering.) "And if they should try to fight," continued the Captain, "what would be the upshot of it? How can they resist the king's troops? Why, mark this,—and here he became entirely serious,—mark what I tell you as a British officer and gentleman: any two bat-

talions in his Majesty's service—any two of the smallest and worst, I say—could march from end to end of this colony; and so, if necessary, they will."

"As prisoners," responded a voice shaking with anger.

It was the voice of Asahel Farnlee. Every one stared at him in amazement or wrath. Moorcastle turned crimson, and showed his long front teeth wolfishly, but merely said in a low voice, "Another time, sir."

Farnlee, without answering, rose from table.

"What's the matter, Ash?" implored Jehiel Oakbridge, seizing him by the hand.

The young man did not notice him; he was looking down at Huldah. The girl was very angry, for she had seen how angry Moorcastle was, and so she must be bitter with her patriotic lover. She returned his reproachful gaze with as much vindictiveness as she could put into her lovely blue eyes. Ash released his hand from Oakbridge's, bowed to the senior Mrs. Oakbridge, and left the house.

"Let him go," called Uncle Fenn to his distressed brother. "He is a rebel—a rebel in blood and bone—a rebel by inheritance. I desire to speak respectfully of age, and to bear evil testimony against no man; but I never yet beheld Squire Dixwell Farnlee without thinking of Cromwell and all the regicides. If I were a king, and had to sleep in the same house with that man, I should expect to have my head and my crown flung out of the window before morning. From communion with all such let us deliver our souls and set apart our feet!"

The parson had meant to be solemn, but Moorcastle burst out laughing. "'Pon me soul that's a rare joke

about one's head being flung out of the window," he said, staring coolly at the old gentleman's huge caput, as if he were thinking how it would smash. " Of course you understand, reverend sir, it 's rather difficult to imagine you going to bed with your crown on. But who is the excitable departed ? Not a relative, I trust. And not to be one, I hope," he added, turning an audacious quizzical stare upon Huldah.

The pretty little turncoat wished that she had never seen Ash Farnlee, and reddened in speechless misery. Sister Ann, coloring too with anxiety, hastened to the rescue.

" Don't think it, Capting Moorksle. He 's just a school acquaintance of me sister's. I cawn't understand why he should 'a' broke out as he did. I 'm sure it was quite oncalled for. Such igspressions!"

" He 's not waiting outside with a ducking-gun, I hope," said Moorcastle, pretending to look with alarm at the window.

" Ash is a good, quiet boy," returned the elder Mrs. Oakbridge, who really did not understand the Captain's fun. " It surprised me very much that he should exhibit such excitement. I cannot imagine him as wishing to shed blood."

Uncle Fenn was indignant. " Pretty goodness!" he cried. " Vastly pretty goodness, to flout and defy the king's troops! As a loyal subject, and as a clergyman of the Church of England, I protest against applying the term goodness to treason and traitors."

Jehiel Oakbridge and his wife glanced at each other, glanced at the red-coated guest, and kept silence. Each was signalling to the other to have patience, and not be inhospitable.

"As a martyr in the king's cause," continued the parson, "I have a right to denounce this demon of insurrection." Then he told the story of his exile:—how he had preached the gospel of loyalty in Tarrytown; how he had been warned out of the place by a committee of whiggish sons of Belial; and how he had escaped tarring and feathering by the favor of God and a one-horse shay. "Yet I complain not,—I am glad to suffer in such a cause," he concluded, looking at the Captain in hope of a compliment.

But Moorcastle was by this time pretty well flown with wine, and he saw everything from a jovial point of view, or from a braggartly martial one.

"Why did n't you face 'em, sir?" he demanded in a tone of trooperish chaffing. "Those fellows are all as cowardly as the geese they pluck. If you had waited for them and faced them, they would have run like lamplighters."

"Another time I will," promised Uncle Fenn, trying to look fierce.

The Captain was immensely entertained. He surveyed the parson's flabby face, his chalky fingers, his protuberant abdomen; and he could scarce forbear laughing at the idea of that poor old corporation plunging into combat. Then he looked around the table for some other subject of mockery.

For by this time he was less of a gentleman than he had been an hour before, as well as a less agreeable object to look upon. The wine had overheated his usually cool British brain, and had crept like a fire from one to another of his embryonic pimples, flushing his face to a spotty crimson. He was in a mood for chaffing any and every provincial, whether Whig or

Tory. He was as completely at ease with his hosts as he would have been with a kitchen full of English valets and maid servants. His voice was as positive, if not quite as stentorian, as if he had been drilling a company of grenadiers. Had Farnlee now been present, the Captain would have insulted him. Farnlee being absent, he singled out John Oakbridge to represent him as the champion of rebellion, and gave the mild, lumpish, humbly smiling storekeeper a humorous bullying.

"Ha! I see, sir," he bugled. "You expect to withstand our brave fellows. What do you know about the art of war, sir? We advance upon you in *echelon*. We turn your left flank—or your right flank either—no matter which. You see us where you did n't expect us, sir. You take to your heels. But the light companies are after you, and the horse-guards, and the dragoons. Your Yankee legs can't waggle fast enough. You are cut down, or captured, every man of you, sir. Now, sir, implore the king's grace, and save your rebel neck, sir."

Then he burst into a roar of laughter over his cavalry wit. "Oh, 'pon me soul, I don't mean you personally," he explained. "I just set you up for Yankee Doodle in general. I am ready to believe that you are a good subject of the king, God bless him."

If any one felt anger, no one showed it. Even the master and mistress of the house meekly labored to smile. The wife of bullied John Oakbridge, considerably sodden with madeira, giggled convulsively at every sentence of the young hero, gasping out, "Oh, Capting Moorksle!" Uncle Fenn nodded assent perseveringly, like a crockery mandarin on a pivot, and at

the close of the chaffing oration drank Majesty's health in all seriousness.

At last the heathen damsels from the Gold Coast looked in to say that the gemman's trooper had come for him.

"Tell him to wait," shouted Moorcastle. "Ah no! —by Jove, no! Duty before pleasure. The General is mightier than even you, Miss Oakbridge; I must go."

There was a confused shaking of hands, with pressing invitations to call again, and promises to come, by Jove. Sister Ann vigorously shoved Huldah into the hall on the trail of the guest; then she closed the door, set her broad back against it, and smilingly winked at her husband.

Huldah, for the first time in her life, was alone with Moorcastle, confused, frightened, and throbibly happy all at once. Not knowing how else to please him, she made a girlish pretence of being anxious for his safety; there were so many rebels in Boston! and what if he should meet Mr. Farnlee!

"Oh, come now!" he laughed. "That 's too funny, your worrying for me. But all the same, it 's most flattering and cheering."

He had taken her by the hand, and now he suddenly threw his left arm around her waist, the audacious and conquering arm of a high-born Briton. There was a rustling struggle, the faint struggle of a colonial soul against English domination, and when it ended, a wine-scented kiss had been laid on a splendid blush.

It was all over, and yet Huldah uttered a cry, and the Captain growled an oath. There had been an unexpected and most unwelcome witness to the kiss. The outer door was open, and within it stood Asahel

Farnlee, his usually ruddy face as gray as ashes. The young man, after a long and sorrowful walk by himself, had returned to the house in a mood of deep compunction, purposing to confess before the whole family that he had shown an unworthy temper, and to beseech therefor the forgiveness of one and all, even that of Captain Moorcastle. In his haste he had opened the door without knocking; and there he stood, a ghastly image of humiliation and misery.

In an instant he turned and walked away, quietly passing the trooper who waited at the gate, but casting at him a glance which made the cherry-cheeked youth draw back his horse. It was the glance of a colonist who had declared war upon the mother country and all that represented it.

A man who is caught kissing a girl not fairly his own is pretty sure to feel disgusted with the situation, and perhaps also a little angry with the girl, as if she were to blame for the whole business. Moorcastle put on his hat, pulled it off to make a formal bow, and tramped out of the house without speaking. Huldah remained alone, throbbing and panting as if from a race, and wondering wretchedly if *anybody* loved her.

Then Sister Ann stole out to her, giggled knowingly into her abashed face, passed a caressing arm around her waist, and asked, "Did he?"

"Ash Farnlee saw it," gasped Huldah, bursting into tears of shame and contrition.

"So much the better," judged Sister Ann, after a moment of troubled reflection. "That gets rid of Farnlee, and fixes Capting Moorksle. Come upstairs and tell us hall about it. Lud! we 'll see you in the peeritch yet."

CHAPTER IV

CONSPIRATORS

SQUIRE DIXWELL FARNLEE of Lexington was in Boston at this time. He had put up at the Swan Tavern, hoping perhaps to get news there of Gage's military plans, for the hostelrie was much frequented by British officers and convivial Tories. Asahel found him in his bedchamber, his huge silver spectacles astride of his Roman nose, transferring some notes from his memorandum book to a sheet of letter-paper.

"Excuse me, honored sir, for presuming to interrupt you," said the young man. He stopped, pressed one hand against his chin to repress, or hide, its quivering, and continued in a low, hesitating voice, "I have something of moment to communicate."

The Squire laid aside his spectacles and pointed to a chair. Then came, in broken sentences, mingled with occasional gasps and chokings, the miserable story of the dinner. It was not a purposed confession, but an unrestrainable cry for pity. The suffering boy could hide nothing, neither the arrogances of Moorcastle, nor the sycophancies of the Oakbridges, nor the slights of Huldah, nor even the kiss. The story panted onward, from one throb of anguish to another, until everything had come out.

The Squire listened in silence, but with a gathering

frown of his bushy brows, and a deepening glow of anger in his hollow eyes. At last, when the tale of the kiss had been sobbed forth, he said, " You must never speak to that young woman again."

Ash laid his head between his hands on the writing table and made no reply. The father rose and walked the room, a tall, gaunt, imposing figure, limping a little with his right leg, for he had been wounded in the last French war. Ere long he paused and faced his son with an air of impatience.

" Asahel, be a man!" he said. " Forget her! That is your duty as one who should desire his own respect. But I mean more than that. We all must be men. We must turn our backs on our own servility. We must be Englishmen; we must have the same rights and honor as Englishmen; or we must die sword in hand."

" Oh, I know what it all meant," groaned Asahel, referring to the Oakbridges. " I was as good as they were, but I was n't as good as that Englishman. She thought so, and they all thought so, and I thought so too."

" But you did finally raise the standard of revolt?" demanded the Squire.

" Yes; she stung me to it. I should have knuckled down like the rest, only she drove me mad. But that is over. Hereafter I am with you in this struggle. Hereafter, if I ever do meet an Englishman again, he shall treat me on equal terms, or I will fight him."

The Squire seemed to feel that enough had been said on that point. He drifted into a long discourse upon the unjust pretensions and policy of George III., Lord North, and the English Tories. Taxation without rep-

resentation had been the dream of every wicked and every silly king of Great Britain. In struggling against that outrage the colonists were fighting the battle of their relatives in the old country. It was their duty, their privilege, their glory, as men of English blood, to continue this battle and to win it.

"We shall triumph, Asahel," prophesied the old gentleman, his haggard features lighting up with enthusiasm. "We shall triumph swiftly, and almost without bloodshed. When the king discovers, when North and the Tory squires discover, that we mean war rather than submission to unconstitutional taxation, they will recede from their wicked purpose. They must: they will have no army for such a war: Englishmen will not list to fight against liberty. Even now the battalions are being recruited mainly with wild Irish and mountain Scotch. The men who can understand the tongue of Chatham spurn the royal shilling."

The Squire sat down, drew several deep breaths, struck his clenched fist on his bony knee, and resumed his oration.

"Yes, it will be a brief struggle, and very nearly bloodless, Asahel. The defence will be here, and the victory in England. Lord North will be driven from power; our misguided monarch will be forced to accept Chatham for minister; and the lunatical scheme of unlawful taxation will have burst like a bubble. Once more we shall be on filial, loving terms with the honored mother country."

It was obvious that the Squire had not the dimmest foresight of the coming Declaration of Independence. A man's acts often prophesy far more accurately than his words, and thoughts, and purposes.

The crowned Dummerkopf of Great Britain was not brought to his senses by a lack of soldiers; he was able to hire German bayonets, and so to continue his ill-advised struggle with his loyal subjects. The warfare which ensued was a warfare of law-loving Englishmen dwelling in America, against a mercenary army composed almost entirely of Gaelic Irishmen, Gaelic Scotchmen, Brunswickers, and Hessians, set in the field by a monarch whose blood was nine tenths Guelph and one tenth Stuart.

When the Squire had ended his speech he hastily folded and sealed the sheet of letter paper on which he had been writing. "I must get me back to Lexington, Asahel," he said. "I have momentous news for our Minute Men. They will soon be called on, if I mistake not, to turn out in haste. I have heard disquieting things since I arrived. You will take this letter to Doctor Joseph Warren, and will ask for his orders. If he says remain, make your home at this house, and learn what you can. Here is money for your maintenance."

Ash respectfully assisted at his sire's departure, and then set off to find the celebrated patriot orator. Glancing at his turnip-shaped silver watch, he was amazed to find that it was after five o'clock. What had become of the miserable afternoon? Then he remembered with difficulty (as if it had happened years ago) that, after leaving the Oakbridges, and before returning to the Swan Tavern, he had taken a wild, fierce walk about the city, striving to fly from grief.

He made a considerable circuit to avoid seeing the house where his heart had been broken. But he be-

— held Huldah all the same. Her blond merry face, her blue eyes and rosy lips, were constantly before him, sometimes as kindly as ever, and seeming to plead with him not to hate her. Oh, how he longed to forgive her and be reconciled with her! Again and again he shook his head violently to drive away that lovely haunting face.

Warren's residence was a plain wooden house of moderate size with a neglected and shabby exterior, as though the owner had little money to spare for appearances. Farnlee's knock brought to the door a girl of about ten, dressed in a frock of originally nice material, but now outgrown and frayed.

"Father is out," she said. "But will you please enter? There is n't any fire in the office. If you want to dry your feet, you must come into the kitchen. Father may be back soon."

It was spoken glibly and without shyness, as if she were accustomed to attending to visitors. In the kitchen Ash found a table spread, and three younger children seated at it, the smallest not more than four years old. The meal consisted of mush and milk, a broad cake of corn bread, and water for drink. The platter, the plates, and the mugs were of pewter, after the fashion of the day except among the very rich. There was a barrenness about the room which corresponded with the ill-kempt exterior of the dwelling. Ash queried with pained amazement whether it were possible that Joseph Warren, the brilliant orator, one of the chiefs of the province, could be poor.

"Are you one of the Doctor's children?" he asked, seating himself in a corner of the cavernous chimney.

"Yes; my name is Elizabeth, and I am the oldest,"

the girl replied with evident satisfaction. "I am the housekeeper now. You knew mother was dead, did n't you?"

"I was n't sure," stammered Ash, kindly unwilling to admit that he knew nothing about it.

"Oh!" said Elizabeth, obviously mortified.

"But I don't live in Boston," he hastened to explain.

"Oh!" returned Elizabeth, brightening again. "Well, you see, old Chloe—she 's a black woman, you must know—she does the heaviest of the work. But *I* am the housekeeper."

"And can you govern all these children? I don't believe you can govern that little fat fellow."

The youngster in question, with one brief forefinger in his mouth, gave Ash a sidelong, sulky glance, as if he would like to have that subject let alone.

"I *have* to," said Elizabeth with a gravity which confessed that the task was not always a pleasure. "Father says I *must*. But now, sir, if you please, we are going to have supper, for the children are hungry, and father said not to wait. Will you sit with us, sir?"

Ash doubted if there would be enough for the Warrens, so lightly was the table spread. He was glad to be able to say that supper was waiting for him at the tavern.

"Oh! is it?" smiled Elizabeth. "Then you can go on warming your feet."

She made him a shy, half-way courtesy, and skipped gayly over to the table. The chubby youngster, suspending his luncheon of forefinger, seized a slice of corn bread and lifted it to his mouth, which opened

so wide that one could see nearly all his little white teeth. Elizabeth swiftly caught his fat hand, and put it smartly down on the patched table-cloth.

"Topsyturvey!" she cried in shrill reproof. "You must wait for the blessing."

Topsyturvey stuck out his under lip, but he bowed his flaxen head with the others while Elizabeth murmured a childish grace. Then the little housekeeper deftly served out the mush and milk and the corn-cake. But Topsyturvey was insurrectionary; he wanted molasses instead of milk.

"There is n't any molasses," said Elizabeth. "God does n't send molasses to sulky boys. And besides, it 's hard times in Boston. You must eat what is set before you, or you may see worse times."

Topsyturvey stuck out his lip again, and made a hitch to leave the table. But Elizabeth sprawled forward, grappled him by one fat arm, and held him in his chair.

"You better not run behind the door to pout," she said. "How do you know but what Punk is there?"

Turning to Farnlee she explained: "He 's a most dreadful boy for pouting. Whenever he used to be mad, he 'd go behind that door and stick out both lips, just as they are now. But he 's ever so afeard of yellow punkins, because he saw one once that had been made into a jackolantern, and it had great awful, fiery teeth. So one day father put a punkin behind the door, all ready for him to be naughty. And when Topsy went there to stick out his lip, oh! did n't he come flying out again, squealing, 'Fraid of Punk! 'fraid of Punk!' And now he don't go behind the door any more. Why don't you, Topsy?"

" 'Fraid o' Punk,'" confessed Topsy, with the air of one who says, " I know I 'm silly, but it 's too much for me."

His fit of rebellion was over. He cast a sidelong glance at the door, as if to make sure that no globular yellow vegetable were stealing out upon him, and then settled down to a steady bout with his nourishment.

Presently Warren entered, with the haste of a man who knows that he is late to supper, and does not know whether he will be allowed time to finish it. Ash rose, and stammeringly introduced himself, meanwhile producing his letter.

" Ah! you are the son of Squire Dixwell Farnlee," said Warren, with a charming smile, though in the next moment he glanced at the sparsely furnished table and flushed slightly. " He is one of our truest and wisest. Sit down while I look this over."

Ash studied him as he stood by the window to read. Warren was then thirty-four years old, and evidently in the prime of health and strength, though his smile revealed the fact that he had one false tooth. His figure was fairly tall, of medium stoutness, and graceful in carriage. His abundant hair, neatly curled and powdered, waved back from a high though not broad forehead, and fell in a knot, or " bag," over the turned-down collar of his coat. His profile was gently aquiline, and there was a considerable fullness to the smoothly shaven cheeks, as well as just below the jaws on either side. The lips had a flexible tumidity which indicated a fondness for good living, and for the physical pleasures of life in general. The prevailing expression of the whole countenance was a calm, polished

urbanity, somewhat too settled and, so to speak, intentional.

An acute observer would have said that here was a man naturally given to society and conviviality, but able to turn his back upon them in obedience to duty or ambition, and well suited to rise by magnetizing and winning his fellow-creatures.

His attire,—the high white neckcloth, the wide shirt collar turned over it, the sky-blue coat of fine broad-cloth, the yellow vest fringed with silk, and the ruffled wristbands,—all the sartorial man,—suggested extravagance and dandyism. But it was obvious that this sumptuous raiment had been purchased many moons since. There were stains on the vest, and the frills showed ragged edges, and the buttons of the coat needed refastening.

Warren read the letter twice, tossed it upon the smouldering fire, and poked it with his shoe till it blazed. Then he threw off his air of anxious reflection, and turned to Farnlee with the sweetest possible smile on his lips, the smile of a genial nature accustomed to be a favorite.

"I crave your pardon for my forgetfulness," he said. "Won't you favor me by taking supper with me?"

Then, seeing how little was left of the frugal meal, he pouted his lips discontentedly, much like Topsy-turvey. "Is that the best you could do, Betsy?" he asked. "No potatoes even?"

"Don't let me disturb you further, Doctor," begged Farnlee. "I have supper and occupation waiting for me at the Swan."

"It is lucky for you," said Warren. "You would

have fared scantily here. We are not prosperous just now, we Bostonians."

The young man rallied his wits and offered a comforting compliment. "I suppose that Paul and Silas often supped modestly while they were turning the world upside down."

Warren laughed outright. "You cheer me," he said, clapping Farnlee on the shoulder. "Well, yes! many of the men who have shaken the world were poor; they had not time to make money. I sometimes console myself with remembering that our glorious friend, Lord Chatham, the greatest orator since Demosthenes, is head over heels in debt. Am I talking too much of this matter? Well, I am sore over it, for the moment; I have just been rubbed about my poverty. As I was coming home afoot to my mush and milk, one of my venerable Tory acquaintance, the most thriving physician in Boston, stopped his chaise and gave me a lecture. 'Joseph,' says he, 'why waste your time in politics? If you would only mind your profession, you might ride in your coach.' Well, of course," continued Warren with a sigh, "of course I would like a coach. Probably there is n't a man in Boston who better loves a fine horse, a fine dinner, and the elegancies of life. But how can a good citizen let politics alone in such a time as this? My poor old Tory friend does n't know what a selfish, cowardly, shrivelled soul he has. I really wanted to tell him of it. But that would have been an incivility."

He laughed, but he glanced toward the table again, and then he sighed. Probably he was querying what would become of those four little ones in case he should die a bankrupt. But Farnlee, not being a father, in-

ferred that he was hungry. The thought shocked him, for he was in a state of profound reverence for this man, and here he was keeping him from table.

"I must go, sir," he said. "Can I be of any use?"

"What was the last news in Lexington, from Boston?"

"Paul Revere was there yesterday. He said that the *Somerset* had been brought around into the Charlestown River; that the grenadiers and light infantry had been taken off picket-duty on pretence of teaching them a new exercise; and that the transports had been hauled under the sterns of the men-of-war."

"Yes, that was the last. What did they think of it?"

"They thought it serious. They have begun to remove the stores from Concord."

Here there came from the table a sound of discord. Master Topsyturvey wanted more corn-cake, and, forgetting the presence of his father, sought to get it by bawling. Warren faced about nervously; but Elizabeth had already quelled the mutiny; her small red hand was over the rebel's mouth.

"That's right, Betsy," said the Doctor, and turning quickly to Farnlee, he added: "They do well to remove the stores. I think there will be an advance upon Concord within forty-eight hours. Suppose you run about town and pick up what reports you can. Go where you think best; hear and see what comes in your way; and, whatever you learn, let me know it. May God and your conscience reward you."

Asahel went forth under a spell. He had talked with one of those men who are born to bewizard other men. It did not matter that the magician lacked

money, that his raiment needed darning, and his house painting. It did not matter that he neglected his practice, and that his loyalist neighbors called him a bankrupt apothecary. He could toil and succeed amazingly where he chose to toil and succeed. His time was crammed with public business: orations, newspaper articles, circulars, letters, patriotic lyrics, squibs; chairman of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, now that Hancock was delegate to Philadelphia; ere long President of the Massachusetts Congress, and chief of the liberal movement in the colony; and only thirty-four years old!

No wonder the angry Tories charged that he was devoured by ambition, and reported that he had sworn to rise above every rival or perish in the attempt. But his ambition was for precedence in duty, and the rival that he meant to crush was despotism.

CHAPTER V

WATCHING FOR A SORTIE

"**G**OD and my conscience!" Ash repeated to himself as he strode off to spy out the doings and purposes of the British in Boston.

He thought at the time that he had a motto which would strengthen and direct him through all the years of his earthly pilgrimage. A fortnight later it had lost its witchery, and he perhaps had some other battle-cry on his youthful lips.

Farnlee was hungry, and he hurried to the Swan Tavern for supper, hoping that it might invigorate him to do much profitable spying. After supper he listened to the talk of a dozen redcoated officers who had dropped in to pass the evening at cards and ale. But as they said nothing about a sally upon Concord, he finally went forth to watch the barracks, the Charlestown ferry, the frigates in the harbor, the General's residence, the sentry in front of it, and various other places and things, all without picking up a shred of information. By midnight he had gone to bed, a disappointed and worn-out detective.

Next morning he renewed his inexperienced and desultory espionage, patrolling Boston at random and searching for some one whom he could pump with safety. He was amazed at the business deadness and

the depopulation of the city. The streets were nearly as void of people as those of a country village. At last he saw an apothecary whom he knew, standing with folded arms and scowling brow in the door of his shop, and looking as if he were praying for smallpox and typhus fever. But Ash remembered having heard that the man was a Tory, and he splashed across the muddy street in order to pass him without speaking.

Then he came within distant view of the Oakbridge house, and halted with an involuntary scowl to gaze at it. What was *she* doing? Sweeping and dusting the parlor? Taking her two steps forward, and three back, beside the whirring spinning-wheel? It was a faint gratification to note that Captain Moorcastle was not in sight. The fear of seeing him arrive and swagger into the dwelling made Farnlee turn away with a start and hurry onward.

Reaching Faneuil Hall (without intending to go there) he stopped to gaze at the two brass pieces which sparkled in front of it, sentinelled by an artilleryman with his bright sabre at his shoulder. The red-faced veteran gave him a sidelong glare from two bloodshot eyes, and Ash judged it best to saunter away, whistling *God Save the King*, an instinctive bit of hypocrisy.

Next he wandered toward the barracks. There too was a sentry, and at one end of his beat a guard-relief, the dozen or so of shining muskets stacked, and the men standing in groups, or sitting on a long bench. The English term of service was then fourteen years, — and most of the regiments in Boston had not been much recruited for some time back, so that the soldiers were nearly all veterans. They looked it; they were neat, stiff, silent, with patient eyes and grim mouths;

their clean-shaved mugs had an expression which reminded one of well-trained bulldogs. Ash said to himself that the only way to defeat such men was to resist them from behind breastworks, or to attack them by ambushings and surprises. The French had whipped them at Ticonderoga; the Indians had whipped them near Fort Duquesne; why should n't Yankees whip them ?

Ash now went to the Province House (the General's official headquarters) to show his pass to Lexington and learn whether it needed any further endorsement. But when he reached the steps, he suddenly felt that he could not face Captain Moorcastle, and he halted. A natty corporal, with light blue optics and a pacific pugnose, stepped up to him and briskly demanded his business.

" Is Lieutenant Eastwold in ? " enquired Farnlee, suddenly calling to mind the name of one of the junior staff-officers.

" 'E is hout," said the corporal, staring him straight in the eyes. He was looking at the visitor as he had been trained to look at every man whom he addressed, though that man should be a major-general.

But Farnlee, unfamiliar with military ways, took it for granted that he was an object of suspicion. He muttered something about calling again, and hastened to depart before he should be seized and searched, for he had certain patriotic memoranda in his pocket-book which might get him into serious trouble.

Ere long he stumbled upon the harbor, not far from Hancock's Wharf. The sinuous line of water-front, diversified with wooden piers and jetties, was bare of commerce and every other species of industry. The

only vessels at the anchorage were several black, lofty, lumpish craft, showing rows of gun-ports and floating the red cross of the mother country. Ash looked about him for indications of a movement on the part of either fleet or garrison. Nothing of that nature was visible, except the lurching march of a squad of tarry jackets, brimming full of Boston's four-penny New England rum, who were being thumped towards a boat-stair by the musket butts of some escorting redcoats.

"So our commerce has come down to that," said our newsmonger to a seedy citizen who was vacantly watching the reshipment of Britain's jolly hearts of oak.

"Lord! if we could ship 'em all, the same way!" groaned the man. "Yes, look at our port! not a trader in it! And look at me! A year ago I had decent clothes, and I owned a sloop. Now I'm in rags, and my family too. And what had *I* done? Oh, I know it was hasty to fling the tea overboard. But Boston might have paid for the tea. *They* did n't want the pay; they wanted to ruin us; and they have, curse them! Curse the ships, and the sailors, and the Admiral! Curse the soldiers, and the officers, and the General! Curse the Parliament, and the old country, too! dod blast her!"

He was crimson faced and out of breath with rage, while at the same time there were tears of despair in his eyes.

After a compassionate silence Farnlee asked, "Is there any news stirring? anything to happen?"

"Maybe. Over Charlestown way," said the man. "I saw more boats in the river than ever I saw there before."

Not many minutes later Farnlee was standing on the ramshackle wharf of the Charlestown ferry. Little did he divine that the landscape now before him would ere long be illuminated in letters of flame and blood which should make it famous in history. Across the narrow strait glinted the five or six hundred wooden houses of Charlestown. Behind them, some seventy-five feet above the water level, rose the abrupt lumpish eminence of Breed's Hill, its slopes divided into lots by rail fences. Beyond it, and united to it by a hollowing neck of land, was the long roll of Bunker Hill, nearly forty feet higher. Quite to the left, facing them both, and on the Boston side of the river, was Copp's Hill, browed along its northern front by a low parapet wherefrom peeped the muzzles of half a dozen cannon. It was a picturesque landscape, a charmingly varied combination of land and water, the earth just turning green under the magic of spring, and the river sparkling with sunshine.

Ash merely glanced at the still unrenowned eminences. He studied for some minutes the sable bulk of the *Somerset*, a sixty-eight-gun ship which lay in the ferry-way. Then he counted six other men-of-war in the bay, between Charlestown and Noddle's Island. There were transports, too; he counted them all. Boats in plenty he noted, some of them swinging at the sterns of the transports, some on the decks of the frigates and gun-brigs. Not knowing what he ought to report to Warren, he tried to observe and memorize everything. He counted the small craft at the wharf, two ferryboats and eight oyster dugouts, besides a couple of navy cutters manned by bluejackets.

The cutters of course belonged to vessels in the

stream, and the officers whom they had brought ashore might be closeted with General Gage, or they might be having whist and punch at some tavern.

Presently Ash found an opportunity to speak to a ferryman, beyond the hearing of the bluejackets. "There are boats enough here," he said, "to carry several hundred men."

The ferryman, a red-headed, freckled fellow, who did not look like a native American, turned an unfavorable, bleared eye upon him, and replied, "Whereabouts do ye hail from?"

His face wore a humorous sneer, the expression of a man who believes that he is being pumped, and who vaingloriously resolves that the pumping shall be in vain. Farnlee perceived that he had to do with a Scotchman, very likely a sailor from one of the transports, or perhaps from one of the frigates. A little angry at the man's tone, he looked him steadily in the eyes and demanded, "Which of these ships did you come in?"

"Wad yer han'r like to go aboard of one?" replied the undaunted Sawney. He gave his sagging tow trousers an upward hitch, and shambled down the wharf toward the cutters. Farnlee judged it wisest to face about and saunter townward with the leisurely gait of idle innocence.

Presently he came upon half a dozen soldiers kicking to pieces the mud fortification of a pack of schoolboys, meantime filling the air with outlandish hoots and yelpings which were not so much fierce as festive. A squad of youngsters stood timidly near by, sulkily watching the destruction of their citadel. One ragged little fellow, who had run off to a safe distance, squealed

without cessation, "Lobsters! darned old lobsters! darned old British lobsters!"

"Why do you plague the boys?" called Farnlee. "The General gave orders last winter that they should be allowed to build their little forts."

"Hi?" queried one of the men, a strongly built young fellow with a freckled face and a merry twinkle in his blue eyes. He tried to reply in English, and then burst into a voluble scream of Erse, meanwhile dancing at Ash by way of challenging him to fight. An older soldier pulled him away, and presently they all staggered off together, chattering gayly in their own language.

"Ever so many of 'em are Irish," said one of the larger boys. "And they are a good deal wilder than our Injuns," he added in his wrath.

"Do you know of any troops getting together to go anywhere?" enquired Farnlee.

"They 's a hull regiment out on the Common," peeped a tiny younker with round, bulging blue eyes.

Ash instantly set off, at his fastest walk, to find the alleged regiment. He was soon outside of the little city, and on the borders of a broad, undulating slope of wild pasture-land, showing a few rows of tents, and three or four scattered buildings, one of which was the powder-house. In the centre stood a battalion, drawn up in square facing inwards, and sparsely fringed with citizen spectators. Our young patriot hurried on, wondering in his innocence if he should hear orders for an advance on Concord, and discovering presently that he had chanced upon a flogging scene.

He peered between the motionless cocked hats (each

with its trim bag of powdered hair drooping behind) and saw a half-naked human figure lying on a gun-carriage, the face downward and the wrists bound underneath. Hard by stood a drummer in shirt-sleeves, his puffy cheeks flushed and his low forehead beaded with sweat, swinging the crimsoned thongs of the cat with mechanical regularity. The strokes fell briskly, every lash raising a red welt, or drawing a spirt of blood.

The victim quivered at each blow, but did not utter a cry. A surgeon, with head slightly drooped, watched his face; and a sergeant-major, standing stiffly upright, counted the blows. The ranks of neat, cleanly-shaven soldiers looked on with a stony expression which seemed absolute indifference. The citizens, nearly all of them boys or fellows of the baser sort, peered between the statuesque files with an automatic grin, occasionally muttering to each other such comments as, "Good stuff! That was a stinger! Has he fainted?"

Next to Farnlee, attired in the blue shirt and trousers of the British navy, stood a gigantic negro, with coal-black tattooings across his shapeless face, obviously a native of Africa. This savage mercenary, very likely a heathen and a snake-worshipper, watched the flogging with a series of chuckles and joyous contortions, as if it were a scene from a farce.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded our American, indignantly, though with less of horror than this degenerate age would imagine.

"I bet on him," sniggered the Krooman, wagging his head at the sufferer. "I knowed dat ar man could n't make him yelp. I 'se been drummer myself,

aboard de *Bulldog*. Dar! he 's had his two hundred.
Now for number four."

Shocked at the idea of this sable barbarian cutting men of white blood and Christian creed, Farnlee bestowed a hysterical curse upon British discipline, and hurried away at an Indian trot.

At the foot of the western slope of Beacon Hill he halted for a minute to recover breath, and to admire the noble dwelling of John Hancock, the finest private residence in Boston. Now came dinner at the Swan Tavern; then a long conversation with some Tory gentlemen, who had plenty of opinions to offer, but no news worth considering; then another extended and fruitless stroll of inspection about the city.

Early after supper he was at Warren's house, relating his adventures and observations, and blushing over their seeming unimportance. There were three other visitors, the members of the Boston Committee of Safety, serious and anxious-eyed men, eager to hear every word.

" What do you say, friends ? " enquired Warren.

" It tallies with what we knew before," answered a small, meagre gentleman, with a high-pitched and positive voice. " I think we had better send urgent warning to Lexington."

Ash had not an idea as to which one of his communications had been judged valuable; but he was proud of himself all at once, and he wanted to be winning more glory.

" There will be a fight ? " he asked so cheerfully that Warren smiled and the committee men turned to look at him.

" Mr. Farnlee, one thing more," said the Doctor.

" I want you to watch the barrack in King Street this evening. If you see any troops marching thence—any considerable body of troops—let me know at once."

Ash returned to the tavern, paid his bill, took his great coat on his arm, and repaired to his post. For nearly three hours he haunted King Street, keeping watch on the long, low mass of the barrack, and trying to make out the dim figures which entered or stole forth. The moon rose, and he became more cautious, lurking behind corners and in shadows. At last, between nine and ten o'clock, there was a hollow murmur in the building, the trampling of many feet over the wooden floors. Next, before Ash could fairly believe his senses, a stealthy column had filed out, and was in march toward the Common. He followed it with a throbbing heart; he made sure that it was heading in the direction of the Common; then he hastened to Warren's house. As he approached it, one man was rushing into it, and another stumbling out of it. In the front hall he met the Doctor and hurriedly told his story.

" Yes, yes," was the murmured reply. " Now get out of Boston and wake them up at Lexington. Go by way of Boston Neck. I have sent Revere by way of Charlestown. One of you ought to reach."

CHAPTER VI

ON THE TRAIL OF REVERE

A SH knew perfectly well that to reach Lexington by way of Boston Neck before Revere could reach it by way of Charlestown was in all probability impossible. But he undertook the task with that headlong energy which fervid inexperience puts into an enterprise, no matter how hopeless.

He hastened to the tavern, hired a saddle horse, and was soon galloping across the flat pastures which then enclosed the southern end of the city. On his left stretched the moonlit expanse of the Bay, broken at one point by the dim mass of Governor's Island, and closed at another by the broad rise of Dorchester Heights, each flecked with a few red tremors which were lights from the windows of peaceful dwellings. But Ash noticed nothing beside the darkling road before him, and the trampling and the hurried breathing of his commonplace steed.

Presently a horseman emerged from the dimness ahead, and rushed past him at a furious gallop. The moon shone on his polished cavalry-boots, and on the gold lace of his uniform. Ash thought that it was Moorcastle; but it was a matter of course that he should think so;—to him every officer was Moorcastle until he discovered the contrary. A minute later he

discerned the Barrier, a long rampart of earthwork and woodwork which ran across the Neck, and ended on either hand in a palisade reaching far out in the shallows. Near the centre loomed two clapboard barracks; and, between them, a timber gateway spanned the road. The gate was closed, and a sentry paced in front of it, the moonlight sparkling on his bayonet.

"Halt!" hailed the soldier, smartly halting and fronting with a resounding slap on his musket. "Who comes there?"

"A friend," shouted Ash, checking his beast and fumbling for his pass with a terrible throb of fright lest he might have lost it.

"Dismount, friend; advance and give the countersign," ordered the sentry, bringing his bayonet to a charge.

Ash dismounted, led his horse slowly forward, and held out his pass, saying, "This is for in and out."

"The countersign, I tell ye," repeated the sentry over his bayonet point. "Corprill of the garrd!" he yelled; then to Farnlee, "Stan' back now, will ye?"

Out came the corporal, a brown-faced and grave-eyed veteran, with an ugly red scar across his cheek. He had a tin lantern in his hand, and by its flickering light he slowly read the pass, moving his lips as he spelled his way downward. "It's no good to-night," he said, returning the paper. "No one passes to-night without the countersign."

"What! not even a friend of the king?" pleaded Ash, with a smile which had some irony in it.

"Not even the king himself," returned the corporal.

Ash remounted, and set off at a walk toward Boston, but presently whipped his horse into a gallop, intend-

ing to get over to Charlestown by the ferry, and then push for Lexington on the track of Revere.

Reaching the ferry, he found that the ferryboats had disappeared, but he discovered a canoe. He dismounted, gave his panting beast a lash to start him homeward, hunted up a slip of board for a paddle, and launched his dugout. Five minutes later, as he was working his way across the river, he burst into a laugh and said to himself, "What must horses think of us?" He had not been so gay since that miserable hour at the Oakbridges' dinner table; and meanwhile, underneath his bubbling of physical elation, there was a vaguely felt current of profound anxiety.

The huge black *Somerset* lay two hundred yards, or more, below his course; he could see her upper masts against the sky, and the red lantern above her quarter-deck. Then he glanced up the stream for signs of a movement of troops. Were the English on the Charlestown peninsula, or were they still on the peninsula of Boston? Of course he could not know that the column had lost time by waiting for the marines, who had not received the order to join the expedition, and so never arrived.

He reached Charlestown without accident, moored his canoe to a wooden wharf, and entered the village. Many citizens were out in groups, murmuring gravely to each other, and staring at him as he hurried past. Eventually a man called to him, "Say, friend! are the troops starting for Concord?"

"Who says they are?" demanded Ash, for he stood in need of positive information, and moreover he had suddenly become fearful of arrest at the hands of some Tory detective.

" Paul Revere said so," replied the other. " Perhaps he dreamt it. He was on his way to Lexington. Got over the Neck half an hour ago, unless the picket stopped him."

A guard at Charlestown Neck, too! Farnlee turned the next corner, hurried down to the waterside, jumped into his dugout, and fell to paddling. It was only about half a mile up the river to Cobble Hill, and from there he could reach the Lexington road without going near the picket.

He paddled ten or fifteen minutes before he got far enough past the head of Barton Point to look down the placid, shining sweep of Back Bay, that landlocked bit of sea water between Boston and Cambridge. Here for the first time he learned something definite as to the whereabouts of the English column and its probable line of advance. Hundreds of yards to his left (how far he could not even guess, in that light) there was a low, long, black object,—a huge sombre serpent on the glitter of the Bay,—crawling out from the peninsula toward the mainland. It was undoubtedly a fleet of boats, laden with British soldiers who had embarked direct from their parade-ground on the Common.

Farnlee now paddled onward with all his might. His dugout, though not a large one, was rather heavy, and he made slow progress; but in a few minutes he was behind Lechmere's Point and hidden from the sight of the flotilla. Where it would land he could not feel sure, though he guessed that it would be at Phipp's Farm, which turned out to be the case. He himself leaped ashore just below Cobble Hill, remembering with transitory compunction that he had within an

hour turned a horse loose and stolen a canoe, but consoling himself with the hope that he would ere long find a chance to pay the damages. Five minutes later he crossed Plowed Hill, and struck into the road from Charlestown to Lexington, four hundred yards beyond the British picket on the Neck. It was a moment of immense, throbbing exultation; he had outgeneraled Gage and outmarched his redcoats.

He pushed on eagerly, double-quic平 for short distances, and then walking to recover breath. There was no danger of being overtaken by the English, for they would have to wade half a mile of swamp before reaching a solid road, and he was already nearer to Lexington than they. But of course he wanted to reach and rouse his fellow-citizens as early as possible before the advent of the enemy; and he still cherished a faint hope of overpassing Revere and being the first to warn Hancock and Adams of their peril. That would win him the praise of Warren, and, what was more, it would please his father.

Apparently not a soul beside himself was abroad in all the moonlit landscape. From time to time he passed farmhouses, some near the road and others far afield, but all unlighted and silent. There was not time to knock up these people and inform them that the British were coming. Besides, he did not know any of them, and it would not be well to roust out some venomous Tory, who might produce a long ducking-gun and march him back to Charlestown. So he tramped forward steadily, disregarding the dogs that bayed at him, and only halting occasionally for a glance rearward. Over and over he wondered whether Revere had got by the Charlestown picket, and whether he

alone were bearing the tidings of the redcoated sortie. If so, there was need that he should make greater speed than could be accomplished on foot.

At last he saw a light in a house not far from the road, and he decided that he would venture to apply for a horse. His knock brought to the door a young man in shirt-sleeves, tall and raw-boned and tow-headed, with the sunburnt face of a farmer.

"Howdy?" said the householder. "What kin I do for ye? Walk in." The story of the English march, and its purport, was hastily told.

"Y' don't say!" the farmer kept repeating, in a tone of gathering excitement; and when the tale ended, he jerked his head back and called, "Ole woman, d' ye hear that?"

A muffled figure in one corner of the huge chimney gasped out, "Can't ye harness up an' do suthin', Abner?"

"Wal, if t' wa'n't for you—" he hesitated, scratching his towsled head. Then he faced the visitor and explained, "Wife's got a fit of asmy and can't sleep."

"You better go, Abner," urged the woman. "You oughter go. Why, it would be an awful shame not to go. You'd never git over it."

She became agitated as she talked, and began to cough painfully. "I sha'n't die," she added, as soon as she could speak again. "I've had this often enough to know what it 'mounts to."

"Wal, you keep still," ordered the husband, looking about for his hat and his lantern.

"If you could let me a horse and saddle?" suggested Ash.

"Hain't got no fitten saddle," returned Abner as

he straddled off to his barn, his towhead a yard in front of his big feet.

"He 'll take ye," said the woman, choking down a cough with a coarse blue handkerchief. "He would n't miss on 't for anythin'. I hope you 'll trounce 'em."

"I hope so," replied Ash. "And I hope you will be better to-morrow. Good night."

He hurried out to aid the husband in getting up his team. Erelong an undersized horse, with the abdomen, and neck, and legs of a sheep (the usual steed of rustic New England in colonial days), was secured by means of a foxy harness to a venerable chaise which had been lightened of its top. Abner re-entered the house, rolled a supplementary log upon the fire, took down his long ducking-gun from its pegs, and uttered his farewell.

"Keep carm, if you kin, Keziah. Keep as carm as you anyways kin. I sha'n't take no pertickler resk."

Then the two men climbed into the creaking vehicle, and under the stimulus of a long hickory whip Dobbin set off for Lexington, quite unconscious that he was aiding to inaugurate a Revolution.

"Nine mile," sniffled Abner, meditatively. "Do it in an hour 'n a haaf; see 'f we don't."

Ash now called to mind Paul Revere, and asked if any one had passed along the road within an hour. But Abner could not say;—the old woman, he explained, had been pretty gaspy for a while; and naturally he had failed to take much notice of the outside world. "Besides, this is a lively rise jest along here," he added; "and folks would be apt to walk their horses, if they knew beans."

"I wish we were at Lexington," said Farnlee, sighing over the spectacle of Dobbin's leisurely gait.

"We'll git there, time to fight, sure 's my name 's Abner Sly. Hey up, Dobbin! boost yerself, will ye? We'll git there, time enough to ambush 'em. That's what I'm thinkin' on. I tell you, Capting, I think about war affairs a sight; they're a real pleasure to me. Now there," pointing ahead to a wooded hollow, "there's jest the sweetest kind of a spot for an ambush. I'd like to ketch the British in sech a hole as that, with our folks behind the trees all around, every man with his duckin'-gun. I tell you it would be fun."

He had a vast deal of this man-hunting talk. Of the principles which interested the Farnlees, of the colonial demands for political rights and social equality, he had apparently never heard, or cared nothing about them. He was a type of the American who hailed the Revolution with joy because it gave him a chance to exercise his pugnacity and brag of his valor.

"Ambushes are the great thing in war," he repeated over and over. "I tell you I believe our redskins are a match for most old-country ginrals. How like darnation they did whip Braddock! They would 'a' tomahawked and skelped his hull army if George Washington had n't understood bush fightin' jest as well as they did. I tell you we must follow their policy, and lay ambushes all the while. The British don't know anything about that kind of warfare. They expect to draw up in line, and fire a volley with their eyes shet, and charge with their bagonets. What's it amount to? You jest lie low, take steady aim, and pull trigger; and down go grannydiers and bagonets in a pile, with the ginral on top. I swear it

jest makes me grin to think on 't. Sometimes I moon over these things till I want to jump up and give a war-whoop."

Ash took little part in the conversation, for he felt his fatigue by this time, and the rocking of the chaise made him sleepy. He tried to be interested; he tried to keep up his excitement concerning the events of the night; but he dozed frequently, and left the talk to his comrade.

"Lordy! lordy!" continued Abner. "How I have longed for a chance at 'em! or at e'enymost anybody! How many times I've looked and looked away over to Boston, and wished the lobsters would come out! But I tell you we've got to ambush 'em and play Injun. I wish 't' King Philip was alive again, and on our side. I've heerd my granther tell no eend of stories 'bout King Philip, though I guess he must 'a' lived a leetle before the ole man's time. By George! how them redskins useter lay traps and make night attacks! I don't hate the Injuns, do you? It ain't manly to hate fellers that fit as hard as they did."

Ash woke up here and mumbled, "What? Oh yes; the Indians. Yes, they fought for their country, and we 'll fight for ours."

"That's so," chuckled Abner. "And we 'll fight in their style too. It's the same country; not quite so many woods, perhaps; but enough for ambushes. That's what I keep a-thinkin' of. I want to chuse my tree, and take a keerful aim, an' hit a redcoat. Darn their bagonets; let 'em come on! If they kin reach me, they may stick me. If I can't hit a man that's a-makin' for me, I say I desarve a bagonet, don't you?"

"Yes, I dare say," mauldered Ash, lifting his head out of a dream. "We must show ourselves as good men as they. We must put down their insolence."

To Abner these remarks seemed to have no special pertinence. He had no bitterness in his soul, and no wrongs to avenge that he knew of. He simply wanted adventures and combat, providing that he might have them in woodland fashion—a good covert and a fair mark.

"Now there," he resumed, waving his hickory towards a ledge of shattered rocks which lined the roadside for some distance, "there's another elegant spot for an ambush. You could hide more 'n a hundred Yankees among them big stuns, and no British ginral on Godamighty's yearth would think of it."

Ninety minutes of such like dozing and dialogue brought the travellers to the straggling village of Lexington.

CHAPTER VII

"THE EMBATTLED FARMERS"

WHEN Farnlee and Abner Sly trotted into Lexington they found it in a turmoil of martial alarums. A raw mist, the premonition of a surly April morning, had been gathering for the last half hour, and by this time sheeted the whole landscape, hiding moon and stars.

But flares of candle-light came from many windows, and red glimmers of lanterns ran about in various directions, sometimes meeting and pausing as if to hold some will-of-the-wisp parliament, and then dispersing swiftly on mysterious errands. Also, there were loud bawlings through the gray obscurity, all referring to the summoning of men, the preparation of arms, and other preludes to combat.

"Great Jehu!" chuckled Abner. "Lexington's as cheerful's a rattlesnake hole. Lordy! how a chap would like to take a pop at one o' them lanterns,—callin' it a redcoat!"

They turned in at the wagon-gate of the Farnlee homestead, and drove up to the barn.

"Guess I'd better stop here," said Abner. "If there's no objection, I'll take Dobbin out of the shay, an' clap some old saddle onto him."

In the kitchen (where there was a fire and a prepara-

tion of breakfast) Asahel found his father pacing to and fro with a martial step which his limp exaggerated. The gaunt old man, flushed by the light of the blazing logs, and dressed in a venerable blue uniform with red facings, looked impressively grim and warlike. His long white hair had escaped from its tie, and rolled in wiry waves down his scrawny neck. His deep-set black eyes seemed to emit flame from under his beetling forehead. Advancing to his son, he took both his hands and pressed them hard, hissing through his snaggle teeth a laugh of exultation. Never before in his life had he given the youth such a cordial greeting. Ash trembled under the emotion which was roused in him by this unexpected overflow of comradeship and confidence. It was by far the greatest compliment that he had ever received from man or woman.

"The desired day has come," said the Squire. "This morning we are called to battle openly against unconstitutional ordinance and despotic aggression. We shall fight for English law, for the rights of Englishmen here, for the rights of Englishmen everywhere."

"Yes, father," said Ash. Then he apologized for being late. "I could n't get here sooner. The guards turned me back at the Barrier, and I had to dodge and shift my way out."

"It matters little. Paul Revere and William Dawes have been here. Hancock and Adams will take refuge at Woburn. The country is arming. We shall be prepared for them."

"Are you in any command here, sir?"

"No, Asahel. The contest has come too late to find me worthy of it. I lack the vigor to guide men

in battle. I shall command nothing but my own horse and my own rifle. Now get your rifle and load it."

A few minutes later they set out for the Green to join the Minute Men.

Under the portico they found Abner, who had respectfully refrained from entering the great man's dwelling, and had passed his time in chattering with two or three farm servants, all armed and uniformed at their master's cost.

"This is Abner Sly, sir, who brought me along," explained Ash.

"What is to pay, Abner?" enquired the Squire.

"The devil's to pay if I take a penny, sir," declared Abner. "I'm as fierce for this war, Square, as you be, savin' your presence."

"Have you been enrolled, Abner?"

"Not a mite. There ain't no Minute Men down our way; it's too nigh the lines. But this old shootin' iron has come nine mile to fight, and I don't want to disappoint it."

"You must be enrolled," said the Squire. "Cato would not permit his son to fight without taking the military oath. We New England men are champions of the British Constitution, and we must not defend law by lawlessness. Are you willing to be sworn into the Lexington Minute Men?"

"I be!" emphatically responded Abner, blushing with joy and pride.

One of the Farnlee bibles was produced, and the new recruit took the military oath to the colony of Massachusetts, and received a certificate of membership as private of the Lexington company of militia. Then the squad marched to the village green, Abner closing

the rear with his six-foot ducking-gun and a four-inch grin of satisfaction.

Around the barnlike meeting-house, and its isolated pepper-caster of a belfry, there were nearly a hundred militiamen, while many others had evidently gathered in Buckman’s Tavern, the windows of which twinkled with glimpses of candle-light. On all sides belated warriors were running in, holding down their cartridge-boxes or powder-horns with the left hand, and balancing their firelocks over the right shoulder. The majority of these men were in uniform, for the Lexington company was an exceptionally well accoutred one, largely owing to the influence of Squire Farnlee and other old soldiers. But this uniform consisted simply of a dark blue coat, the long and broad skirts turned up with red. For the rest the men wore their ordinary cocked hats, knee-breeches, yarn stockings, and buckled shoes. There were a few muskets and bayonets, two or three long and heavy rifles, and many still longer ducking-guns.

A knot of boys had gathered around a hollowed pumpkin with a candle in it, and were trying to warm their red hands at the flickering blaze, and exchanging childish jokes and giggles. Now and then a pale-faced woman flitted by, searching with scared eyes for a husband or a son. Brief murmurs of conversation arose and occasional shouts for some absentee. Every panting new arrival was pretty sure to be saluted with the words, “They are coming.” Sometimes he did not reply; sometimes he asked, “How far off?”

There were many such comments as these: “We ought to be getting ready—Why don’t the Captain do something?—Why don’t the drum beat?”

Some of the grumbling voices were impatient; others were distinctly tremulous and timorous. But the first, as well as the last, had a tone which confessed anxiety.

One group, drawn somewhat apart, was holding an impromptu religious service: a tall old farmer, with spectral eyes, beseeching the aid of the Lord of Hosts; the others listening with bare and bowed heads. At a little distance a gaunt, thin-faced, Roman-nosed youngster, a striking specimen of the village tough of revolutionary New England, skirled defiances and threats which had a powerful odor of rum. "Let 'em come! Dammit, let 'em hurry! Dammit, we're a-waitin'. Goshamighty, I'm hungry for a shoot. Let the grannies fetch out the cider. Dammit, we'll fight it out right here."

Abner Sly sniggered, but the Squire called sternly: "No blasphemies, Silas Bill! This assemblage is here to defend law. Be decent and quiet."

Then he sought out Captain Parker, and presented Abner as a recruit. Parker was a stalwart man of forty with a noticeably martial aquiline face. But he looked anxious, and no great wonder; for in case of a collision he ran more than a risk of being shot and bayoneted; he stood an unpleasantly strong chance of hanging.

"I should like to be in your place," said the Squire. "I have refused all command simply because I am too old and feeble to do an officer's whole duty. But I will share your responsibility. As a justice of the peace, I advise and direct that, if you are fired upon by the king's troops, you may and should, in defence of the laws, return the fire. Only see to it, Captain, and you also, fellow citizens here present, see to it that you

do not fire first. That was the parting injunction of our friends, Samuel Adams and John Hancock; and that is my injunction and order, as an officer of the law. Let the English fire first, if they dare; but then do you each and all fire in return; and so God help you!"

The old gentleman rose on his toes, and then came down solidly on his heels, as if he were addressing a jury.

"And now, Captain, I desire a favor," he resumed. "In consideration of my age and my lameness, I ask leave to serve on horseback. I can act as your orderly, and I can also do scouting service."

There was a murmur of approval, and Parker gave his assent with a modest blush, evidently a little abashed at commanding a veteran officer of the old French war. But presently he rallied his self-confidence, and turning to a rosy-cheeked youngster at his elbow, he said, "Ebenezer, beat the long roll."

The martial insistence of the snare-drum crashed and exulted through the misty air. Hasting forms, summoned out of obscurity by the long-drawn clatter, drifted in from all sides. The four or five women on the Green uttered brief, sharp cries, and fluttered out of sight. The boys were promptly dispersed, and their grotesque fire-monster died a violent death under the Squire's foot, its illuminated grin vanishing suddenly like the spirit of trampled loyalism. A swarm of men surged into a mass, and then slowly spread out into a long line. The Alarm List of Lexington had formed company front.

Ash Farnlee, as one of the tallest of the array, placed himself on the right, near to the first sergeant. Abner

Sly, his fathom-long gun slanting over his shoulder, seized upon a post beside him, and was promptly hustled into the rear rank with the explanation, "Bagonets in front." The Squire limped down to the extreme left, and took position as a supernumerary.

It was an array which showed more patriotic zeal than military effectiveness. The company had gathered in nearly the whole full-grown or half-grown male population of the township. The figures in the ranks were of all ages, and arranged of course without regard to seniority of years, lathy youngsters contrasting with stalwart farmers and white-haired grandsires. One hundred and thirty voices, varying from boyish soprano to ox-compelling bass, answered to the names which the sergeant stammeringly read from the muster-roll. At the close, Squire Farnlee's recruit, who had not yet been added to the list, bawled forth, "Abner Sly!—here!"

There was a titter at that end of the line, followed suddenly by an intense silence, like the hush of boys who have laughed in church. Then the Captain "hemmed" loudly, and shouted in a prolonged, high-pitched cry, "'Ten-shun!'" After another "ahem" he continued: "Fellow-citizens, the king's troops are marching upon Lexington. But it will be quite a spell before they get here. It is a raw, damp morning. We will break ranks for the present, and keep comfortable till we are needed. The picket below the town will warn us of their approach by firing a volley, and then the tithing-man will ring the bell and the long roll will beat, whereupon we will assemble and do our duty. I want you all to stay within easy distance of the Green. Such as can crowd into my house are

welcome. But, before we break ranks, we 'll load with ball."

Here he hemmed once more, and, resuming his drawling cry of command, shouted, "Load at will—load!"

There was a bustle in the ranks, a clicking and thud of ramrods in the barrels, and a return to the position of attention.

"Now then," resumed the Captain, "I want you all to remember the law, as we 've heard it from Squire Farnlee. No firing till the British have fired; then defend yourselves and your cause.—Shoul-der hoo! Right face. Break ranks, march."

There was a prompt dispersion, the villagers mostly retiring to their dwellings, and the farmers to Buckman's Tavern. When the Farnlees reached their home, the tall wooden clock in the kitchen—a white-faced sentinel in his coffin-like sentry-box—marked half-past two in the morning. Two hours passed in quiet, during which Ash tried to sleep in his room, and Abner Sly snored in the barn. The Squire drowsed in an easy chair by the kitchen fire, and on awaking devoured a bowl of hasty pudding and milk.

"Men must feed if they mean to fight," he said to his old black cook, who showed all her yellow ivories and composedly sniggered, "Sart'n, Mas'r Cap'm."

When his son came down, he sent him to the barn to have the three horses saddled. "We may be driven at first," he said. "Of course if the company retires in good order, we will stand by it. But if it disperses, we will hasten home and mount. We will fight as Parthians; we will shoot flying. Understand that I shall take Old Silver. You will take Redskin. Sly

must do the best he can with his own. And you, Venus," he added to the cook, "stuff the saddle-bags with provender. We may have to fight a week."

He smiled grimly; then he dropped his silvery head against the high back of his chair; and ere long he was fast asleep with his mouth open, snoring loudly.

A few minutes later Ash ran into the house, calling, "Father! the picket has fired."

"Ha?—oh—yes," gurgled the old man, clutching the arms of his chair as if to lift himself out of slumber. He smacked his dry lips two or three times to moisten them, and added tranquilly, "I see that I shall have to ride."

They had scarcely got him mounted when the long roll opened its clattering alarum, and the church bell sent forth an eager, stammering jangle. It was now half-past four, but the morning was still so sombre that it was impossible to see distinctly the scores of men who were running or loitering toward the Green. The company formed with the usual slowness of undisciplined and imperfectly drilled soldiers. It was a sadly diminished array; less than a hundred were present. This desertion, and the consciousness of a stern crisis near at hand, cast a gloom over the face of many a brave patriot.

"That's always the way with militia," grumbled an old soldier of the French war. "A great many men like to do their fighting in the chimney-corner. It takes the Articles of War to bring everybody into line."

"Who cares?" said Jonas Parker, the strongest man and best wrestler of Lexington. "A man can fight alone. The British will never make me run. I've said it before, and I say it now."

"Shucks!" was the disgusted commentary of Abner Sly. "This ain't no decent ambush—behind a meetin'-house. We oughter be behind them stun walls."

Captain Parker came up to the Squire, who had taken post in rear of the line, and murmured, "This is no fighting position. Shall we stay here?"

"In the name of the law—yes!" returned the old man. "If those intruders order us away, we will not stir. If they fire, we will fire. If they begin it, we will end it. With your leave I will say a word to your men."

He touched Old Silver with his heel, and rode slowly from left to right along the rear of the company, shouting over and over in a loud, firm voice, "Comrades, when the British aim, stoop low. The shots will mainly pass over. Then rise, aim at the waistbands, and fire."

"How will you get Old Silver to scrooch, Square?" asked Robert Monroe, the veteran of the Seven Years War.

"Old Silver and what sits astride of him will take it as it comes," returned the Squire.

There was a fairly cheerful horse-laugh in the ranks. The old man rode back to Parker and growled exultantly, "I think that did them good."

The Captain looked up at the grim ancient with a feeling akin to reverential horror. It seemed to him in that moment that they were all held there in the jaws of death by Squire Farnlee. Both he and the majority of his soldiers would have been glad to evade the collision which was trampling toward them, or at least to face it from behind some covert which would give them a slight chance of safety, if not of victory.

Yet they were braver than the average man. They were braver than the average of the long-service veterans who were advancing upon them with a perfect certainty of dispersing them as easily as a mastiff disperses a brood of kittens. They were poorly armed, miserably drilled and disciplined, unused to warfare, and few in number. Not one of them knew but that all his inexperienced comrades might desert him at the first shot. If they fought, it would be without hope of triumph, not even the faintest. *Their* fight must be to receive a volley; some of them falling dead, of course; the rest dispersing, of course. So the struggle for American liberty must commence. It was not battle; it was martyrdom. And they stood up to the stake without being chained to it.

No wonder they looked about them with grave faces and troubled eyes. Many of them gazed upon their own dwellings, querying whether they would ever re-enter them alive, or whether they would be borne into them bloody corpses. Others looked fixedly at the church, calling to mind the sermons they had heard in it, the prayers, and hymns, and sacramental invitations. Others strove with nervous energy to forget the situation, and to think of nothing but trifles. Robert Monroe, the time-worn soldier, kept repeating to himself, "I have been through it before, and I shall go through it again."

In the distance were anxious groups—mothers, wives, young children, decrepid grandsires—peering through the gray air for husband, father, or son—waiting to see if he would live or die.

CHAPTER VIII

“THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD”

A SH FARNLEE was as serious as were his comrades. To his surprise (and it frightened him with the idea that he might be a coward), his feelings inclined to tenderness, and not to violence. He had lost his vindictiveness; he did not desire to hurt any Englishman, however arrogant toward Americans; he even thought of Moorcastle and Huldah without anger. He was, as it were, on his deathbed, and must forget the little bitternesses of earth, and be forgiving to his fellow-creatures.

But he was stubbornly resolved to remain at his post of danger and duty. No dread of death or laceration should drive him to desert his comrades and dishonor his name. Flight was indeed morally impossible while his father was near at hand; he would have been torn to pieces by bayonets sooner than show himself a craven to his father.

Meanwhile (fearful lest there might be some poltroonery in his heart) he was constantly repeating to himself what he must do and be. “I must be the very last to retreat; I must show myself the best man here.” Once he thought out, without opening his lips, a few words of prayer: “Our Father, spare my life, if it be consistent with Thy purposes; if not,

strengthen me to do my duty to my last breath; spare me or strengthen me."

Of a sudden everybody heard the monotonous thrum of the English drums, mingled with the piercing gayety of the fifes. It seemed incredible that they should be so near, and that possible battle should be really at hand. But now came the head of the column: first, a single mounted officer gliding from behind Beekman's Tavern; then a squad of drummers and fifers, storming out their inspiriting music; then file on file of scarlet soldiers, their black gaiters swinging in unison and their muskets at the carry. This was the detachment of six light-infantry companies which had been assigned to Major Pitcairn with orders to make a forced march upon Concord and seize the bridges. Lieutenant-Colonel Smith with the grenadiers was a mile or two in rear.

Pitcairn already knew of the gathering of the Lexington militia, and had decided what action to take in regard to it. His judgment and purposes were as purely military as if he had been a Frenchman, or a Russian, instead of an Englishman. He did not do what he undoubtedly would have done in his own country; he did not call for a local magistrate and demand a dispersion in the name of the law. These people were merely colonists: they must go if an English officer told them to; or they must be fired upon. He made just such a tactical movement as he would have made in the presence of declared traitors or alien foes. Here was a threatening force; no good officer would leave such a force in his rear; he must disperse it before he resumed his march upon Concord.

His orders rang out in the hard, piercing tone of an

old soldier. The three leading companies successively ran forward into line so as to face the militia, while the three rear companies marched on some eighty yards, and there halted and fronted. The two lines, one on the Green and one in reserve on the road, were in position almost at the same moment.

Apparently the Americans did not understand the manœuvre of double-quicking from column of march into line of battle. They thought, and afterwards reported, that the English undertook to charge them, but fell into disorder and were halted by their officers. They were startled, no doubt; but not a man of them moved. They were determined to remain in their ranks and see whether the English would dare disperse them by force.

Pitcairn now rode forward, followed by two other mounted officers, an adjutant and an aid. He was still fifty or sixty yards from the militia when he called in a harsh, authoritative tone, the tone of a soldier who has no time to waste, "Disperse! ground your arms! disperse!"

He was not armed for combat. He had in his hand merely a light cane, such as officers in those days usually carried. Nor did his voice seem to express anger; it was simply impatient and positive, with perhaps a slight undertone of anxiety; it was like the voice of a man who cries, "Stand out of the way! why do you want to get hurt?" But as a soldier, as a straightforward Englishman, as a native of the motherland addressing colonists, he could use only imperative and irritating words.

A collision was now inevitable. The men to whom he thus spoke were of the same blood with himself,

and were equally sure that law and right were at their back. No doubt every heart in that line of yeomen beat with anxiety, if not with distinct, pungent dread of death. But they called up all their self-respect; they remembered their privileges and customs as children of a free race; and they waited stubbornly for the volley which should put their king in the wrong.

Pitcairn hesitated. He had not the least suspicion that he was on the verge of a struggle which would disrupt the British empire and introduce a giant republic among startled kingdoms. He divined as little what he was about to do as does an infant who drops a lighted match into a barrel of powder, merely because the match burns its fingers. He did not suspect that he was helpless; that he was but the tool of a situation which had become destiny; that, whatever he did, he was to bring about the American Revolution. He hesitated simply because he was a kindly man, no longer young and eager for adventure, averse to violent measures, averse to bloodshed.

But in a moment his perplexity vanished before a sense of military duty. He thought of his delayed march and of the unseized bridges. An angry scowl wrinkled his baldish forehead, and, throwing himself forward in his saddle, he yelled, "Disperse, you rebels! You villains, why don't you disperse?"

Then turning to his foremost companies, by this time aligned and steady, he ordered, "Forward, the flank platoons! Surround those fellows!"

The aid and adjutant wheeled away to superintend the movement, while Pitcairn rode to one flank to leave a clear field for the advance. The two outer platoons, dropping their muskets to a trail, came on briskly.

The Americans, as a body, stood firm. Here and there a man recoiled a step or two, but meantime others ran in to join the company. Just at this moment two or three of the English fired, and it must have been by accident or in nervous agitation, for no American was hit. But there was an instantaneous response from a cool marksman. A single red gleam shot out from a stone wall on the right, and Pitcairn's horse plunged forward with a bloody scratch across the quarter.

Then came the inevitable: the first volley of English absolutism at provincial liberty: a hasty, intermitting volley, which seemed to repent even in its angry outburst: a sputter of single shots, then a platoon crash, then silence, then crash after crash until every musket had spit flame: then the groans and astonished shrieks of the first martyrs of the Revolution. There were cries of "Fire," and cries of "Cease firing," uttered by no one knows whom. Pitcairn, whirling around on his affrighted steed, gestured wildly with his cane, striking it downward as if to emphasize some order. But if he spoke, no one heard him, or no one distinguished what he said.

The volley (if one may call it a volley) was strangely ineffective. The soldiers had fired while advancing, and probably with little desire to kill. Of about a hundred Americans there present, only one fell dead on the company line, and two wounded. Jonas Parker, the veteran Monroe, and a very few others returned the fire without recoiling. The rest dispersed at once; two or three facing about, after a few steps, and firing; others running to a neighboring wall and firing from there.

Meantime the English officers were struggling to halt

their men and reform the disordered ranks. But in spite of their shouts there was a wild surging forward, a springing forth of individual soldiers, and a fitful resumption of the musketry. Jonas Parker, the Lexington Hercules, who had kept his promise not to run from the British, fell at this moment. A shot brought him to his knees, and, as he was reloading in that position, a wild thrusting of bayonets finished him. A few steps away, pierced also by both ball and bayonet, lay the old soldier, Monroe.

We must go back a minute in order to study the experience of Ash Farnlee. When the English rushed into the Green his first thought was for himself, and he had a humiliating consciousness of hoping, "Surely they won't kill *me*." Then he heard a voice behind him exclaim in a tone of intense disgust, "Oh—shucks!"

He glanced over his shoulder, and saw Abner Sly fleeing with amazing speed toward the right, apparently to gain the cover of a stone wall which lay in that direction. The spectacle so infuriated Ash that he would have been glad to crack the fugitive's skull with his rifle butt. All his courage and combativeness came back to him, and he turned to face the advancing soldiers with angry eyes.

He supposed that there would be a stubborn and bloody conflict, and he prepared for it by selecting a victim. Back in the road, stationed in front of the redcoated reserve, was a mounted officer who seemed to him to resemble Moorcastle. He decided that this officer, and not those men whose faces were so distressingly near him, should be his mark. Then came a medley of ideas or perceptions: the English had halted

and were re-forming; they were between him and the meeting-house; the American bullets would break the windows; that commanding officer had a queer, strained voice; what was it he said about villains? and why did he canter off to the right?

Ash glanced that way, and beyond Pitcairn he saw Abner Sly peering over the stone wall, looking so eager and anxious that he was almost comical. Was the fellow going to shoot before the king's troops did? But the redcoats were advancing; they were firing also, —one, two, three shots; nobody hit. He was still staring at Abner Sly, and he saw the blaze of that hero's ducking-gun, while at the same moment he saw Pitcairn's horse plunge forward.

Then came the volley: clatter crashing after clatter; a deafening, shaking, abominable uproar: strange whistlings, too, over his head: a cry of pain at his side. The next instant, totally forgetting the officer who resembled Moorcastle, he had fired at a tall soldier whom he never saw before and never saw afterward. Then, without noticing whether the man fell or not, he was hastily reloading his rifle.

Yet his eyes were open to everything around him. Pictures were painted on his memory, never to be effaced. He noted particularly the leaders of the swarm which surged forward to finish the wounded. The first to reach a victim was a lean, swarthy, pallid young fellow, his black eyes glaring and his ghastly cheeks twitching, whose motive in killing seemed to be scared rage,—revenge for a fright. Another was a mere beast, a powerful creature with a lithe, pantherish spring and a broad, flabby, expressionless face. Ash also remembered for life the bayoneted men: the

little, knotted, wrinkled old soldier, Monroe, clutching at the weapons and cursing; the big wrestler, Parker, trying to raise his gun and then doubling over on his back. The bayonets crossed and clicked as they were plunged into the bodies of these heroes. War was more brutal then than it is in these days of long-range firearms.

Ash now perceived that he was alone and nearly surrounded; and without stopping to fire a second shot, he fled at the top of his speed. Something behind him (could it be a human voice?) shouted in a tone of gay eagerness, "Shoot that tall fellow!" Balls and buckshot hissed by him spitefully; but he reached the covert of a small building—a blacksmith shop—without being hit; there he halted and looked back.

There was still a fitful blazing and banging of musketry. Several of the patriots had taken posts behind walls and detached buildings, and were firing thence upon the regulars. Platoons of these last were charging to right and left, the men running eagerly with their muskets at the trail. One platoon—a loose, panting swarm—rushed at the wall where Abner Sly had made his ambush, and where five or six heads could now be seen.

Ash fired at the scarlet coats as they passed him, and grinned horribly when one man fell. Then, while he reloaded in frenzied haste, he watched the skirmish. The townsmen fled, and the soldiers chased them across the fields, kneeling individually to shoot, and then running on. Two of the fugitives went down, and Ash heard their screams for quarter, and saw groups stabbing at them. Of the eight fleeing Americans that dropped that morning not one escaped death.

The life of the lately tranquil village had become a clamorous tragedy. Shrieks of women and long-drawn, unappeasable wails of children came from the dwellings. Ash saw one man, Jonas Harrington, lying in front of his house, and his wife struggling frantically to lift him up, her mouth wide open with horror, and her cheeks drawn and ashy.

But he had no time or will to bestow sympathy and aid; he thought of nothing but of securing his own safety and then shooting more Englishmen. He cast a swift glance around him, sprang out from his covert, and bounded homeward. Yet the fury and terror of battle had not deprived him of all human sentiments, and as he panted onward he looked to right and left in search of his father. Neither the old Squire, nor the white horse, was lying about anywhere.

"He is at home," thought Ash; but at the house he found only Abner Sly, mounted on Dobbin and holding Redskin by the bridle; the horses and the human creature all alike anxious and restive.

"Hurry up!" bawled Abner. "Hurry up, if you don't want a bellyful of bagonets."

"Where is father?" demanded Ash as he leaped into the saddle.

"Ole Silver run away with him. Last I seen of him he was jumpin' acrost lots for Concord. Tell ye th' ole gentleman was leanin' back on the bits all he hefted."

"We 'll make a turn by the lane and overtake him," said Ash.

They cantered through a succession of meadows, and were soon far away from the village. When Abner spoke again it was to explain his tactics during

the skirmish, though, by the way, he did not suppose that they needed justification.

"Sho!" he began in a tone of honest derision. "That was a dum foolish spot to draw up in—there on the Green. That wa'n't no fitten place to fight the Johnny Bulls in. We oughter been behind the stun wall. And when I seen 'em chargin', I started for it, I did."

"I saw you there."

"Did, hey?" chuckled Abner. "Well, by gum, I'll bet you wished you was alongside of me."

Ash could not help smiling at a recollection that something of the sort had entered his mind.

"If we'd all been behind that wall, we'd 'a' whipt 'em," continued Abner. "I tell you there's no common sense in the reg'lar way of fightin'. The redskins have got the only long-headed tactics:—hurt your inemy and don't get hurt yourself. All the rest is ginral-trainin' strut and tomfoolery. Did you see me hit the kurnel's horse?"

"I'm afraid father will say you fired too soon."

"No, he won't say no sich tarnal nonsense. The Square is a judicious, hard-headed gentleman; though I do think he and Parker might 'a' posted us more sagayshusly; that I must say. Why, I fired jest as the Square spelt it out to us. 'Wait for the British,' says he, 'and then shute back.' Well, I counted three shots, and then I counted one for Abner Sly. If my turn did n't come in then, when would it come in? Arter I was shot and bagoneted? The Square will say I waited long enough, and the rest waited too long. What come o' Jonas Parker?"

"Bayoneted."

"Is, hey? By gum, I wish I'd killed that kurnel. I could 'a' done it, first pop. I did n't do it, because he set up there so like a—like a major ginral; I swear I could n't bear to kill him. So I jist gin his horse a scrape to let him know that Yankees were about, and he must n't be too dum arbitrary and domineering. They bagoneted Jonas, did they?—the best wrasler in the county! By gum! hereafter I shoot to kill every time, first bullet and last."

If anybody had told Abner that he was no better than a redskin, he would have replied, "I don't wanter be."

I dare say that he was the progenitor of more than one ranger of the West and "bad man" of the Rocky Mountains.

CHAPTER IX

AMBUSHING THE KING'S TROOPS

ON the Concord road, nearly a mile from Lexington, Ash and Abner found Squire Farnlee, astride of Old Silver, craning aloft in his stirrups to reconnoitre the enemy. He had a red silk handkerchief tied around his temples, and there was a streak of dried blood down one of his wrinkled, dusty-brown cheeks, which looked all the harsher and dryer because they had escaped the usual morning shave.

"They have n't left the village yet," was his matter-of-fact salutation.

"Did you get hurt, father?" asked Asahel with a gulp of tenderness.

"Only a chip off; there 's plenty left of the old block." He gave his horse an indignant jerk on the bits, and added, "This blockhead ran away. He dispersed like a company of militia."

"Do you think the company behaved badly, father?"

"No," said the veteran. "New troops generally give way to old ones. I did n't expect a victory *there*."

"Wal, Square, here 's what 's disappinted," grumbled Abner Sly. "I don't like being throwed on the fust holt."

"I err," added the old man. "The victory is won. We have placed the king's troops and the king in the

wrong. Our people will now arise in the name of the law and of justice."

"That's good 's fur 's it goes," said Abner. "But I hope we hain't got to give the inemy the fust shot every time. I don't arise to battle on no sich understandin'. Did you know, Square, they bagoneted Jonas Parker?—best wrasler in the county! That's a royal loss to Massachusetts."

"Somebody must fall," returned the old soldier. "He will be remembered when you and I are forgotten."

"Yes; he was a splendid wrasler," sighed Abner.

The Squire rose on his long legs, and craned along the road toward Lexington, lifting his peaked chin and half closing his hollow eyes to see better.

"We are in the right position to receive them," he said with grim satisfaction. "We can fight them all the way to Concord, and perhaps make them 'display' now and then, and so lose time. We will play the Parthian on them," slapping the butt of his rifle. "There is a chance of making a Carrhæ out of this day's business. The farther the redcoats march into Massachusetts, the likelier it is that none of them will march back. Asahel, it would be a fine spectacle to see a battalion of them as prisoners."

Asahel smiled bitterly and sadly. Even the hope of a triumph over Moorcastle could not enable him to forget how miserable Moorcastle had made him. When he came out of his sullen reverie Abner Sly was dinning away as usual about ambushes, like Don Quixote babbling of enchanted castles.

"What I want, Square, is to find a skulkin'-hole in the woods, and open on 'em by surprise. We could

give 'em the Injun war-whoop, too; I know how to yelp it; wa wa wa! We might throw the hull biling of 'em into confusion, and slarter 'em clean back to Bosting. They hain't got no George Washington to save 'em, as he did in Braddock's defeat."

"We may try something of the sort, Abner," returned the Squire, smiling at these extravagant calculations. Then he listened toward Lexington, putting up one hand as an ear-trumpet and signing with the other for silence.

"That's it, Square," murmured Abner. "That's their tarnal ole snare-drum. What dum fools they be to let us know they're comin'!"

"We will fall back," said the veteran, quietly wheeling his horse. "We will take post at the next turn, behind the brush. When they get within range we will fire once, and then retire upon a new position."

"That's what I call ginralship," nodded Abner. "That'll worry 'em like a box on the snoot to a feller that's arter a kiss." This simile apparently put him in mind of his courting days, for he added, "Tell you what, gentlemen, I wish my ole gal could be around and see me fight. She's always sniggered when I've jawed about battles and sich. Great Jehu! would n't I like to show off to her!"

The Squire's ambush succeeded to Mr. Sly's entire satisfaction. When the British advance-guard was within a hundred yards, the three sharpshooters emerged from their hiding-place, took deliberate aim, and brought down a redcoat. A volley responded, but musketry at that distance was mere chance shooting, and the balls strayed about the country harmlessly. Old Silver showed his talents for Parthian warfare by

running a furlong or two before he could be pulled in.

"A plague take this beast!" grumbled the Squire. "He will wear me out before we come to serious battle. Your horse, Abner, keeps up well for an animal of his build."

"Dobbin hates to be left out," explained Dobbin's owner. "He 's amazin' fond of company. Awful sociable, ain't ye, Dobbin? If Dobbin could speak, I expect he 'd talk the hull day, and do his eatin' nights. How many did we bag that time, Square? I say two. At that rate four hundred ambushes will lay out the entire colyum. Take us a month or two, unless we have more men. I say, Square, do you reely think a rifle is truer than a good long duckin'-gun? Do, hey? Wal, s'pose it is, then, if you say so. But I allays shall admire a six-foot duckin'-gun. It 's the weping that our granthers fit King Philip and the Narrowgansetts with; I guess that 's what makes me like it so. Annyhow, if it hits a man, he feels as though he 'd been punched with a liberty pole, and quits pesterin' you all of a suddint. But erry one of 'em—rifle or duckin'-gun—is wuth four bagonets. I consider, Square, that a bullet, rightly aimed from a good bar'l, is a bagonet that sticks a man forty rod away, and sticks him clean through, fust jab. Lordy! what a fuss some of them Tories do make about the British bagonet! Shucks! it took seven or eight pokes to finish one of our chaps this morning, and he already down with a bullet! By thunder, Square, less have another shute."

There were two more ambuscades during the next mile. Each time a man or two dropped in the scarlet

vanguard, or reeled out of the ranks and sat down by the roadside. On each occasion, also, the vanguard returned a volley, and without effect. War on these terms was by no means terrible to the Americans, and the two novices were ready to affirm that they really liked fighting.

But eventually a mischance befell our Sons of Liberty. The column had halted to rest, and our three Parthians were watching it from a distance, when several redcoats aimed at a considerable elevation and fired together. There was a sharp *whit whit* of bullets, and Abner Sly doubled up with a piercing yell, clutching both hands across his abdomen. His companions, thinking him mortally wounded, stared at him aghast, while his horse took advantage of the loosened bridle to steal to the roadside and nibble at a tuft of herbage. Abner kept his seat, but he continued to give forth a keen, quavering cry, terrifying to listen to.

"Hit, man?" demanded the Squire. "Asahel, jump off and pick up his gun."

Asahel picked up the gun, and also a bullet. "Here!" said he. "Here's your ball. You are not dead yet."

He spoke with that somewhat egoistic scorn which the unhurt combatant accords to the slightly wounded comrade who makes an outcry. Abner, still warbling with his mouth wide open, stared for some seconds at the little globe of lead. Then, with a curious expression of mingled hope and terror, he withdrew his hands from his waistband, and looked for the supposed bullet hole. It was not visible; his leather belt had saved him; there was the dint. His face brightened, and he burst into a glad, childish giggle, broken by pantings and hiccoughs.

"Gimme the dum thing," he gasped. "I want to show it to Keziah."

Even the grim Squire smiled, and Ash burst out laughing. Then they had to wheel and gallop away, for the English had divined that some one was hurt, and several of them were running forward with fixed bayonets.

This adventure temporarily depressed Abner's spirits and enfeebled his pugnacity. "Tell you what," he said, "that ball gin me a most ongracious tunk on my stummick. Guess I told on 't at the time, did n't I? Wal, I did feel a mite low-sperited. No use in a man's tryin' to be cheerful when he thinks he 's got an ounce of lead in his bread-basket. Dunno 's I want to resk another tunk right away; don't seem to feel so ambitious as I did. And this dum old Dobbin"—here he banged him with his heels—"had n't no more human feelin' than to go peckin' round for a luncheon when I was yellin' farewell to airth. Tell you, Square, if a man don't mourn for his own troubles, there won't be no great of a mourning for 'em. But lordy! don't ever tell my Keziah about my screechin' and bellerin'. I 'd never hear the last of it. No man as is a man wants his own wife to larf at him."

"Cheer up, Sly," said the Squire. "You will soon be in a martial humor again. There will be provocation for it; there will be bloodshed and arson. Our people will strike hard when they see their houses and barns in flames. They will avenge their properties, if they won't avenge their liberties."

"By thunder, yes!" affirmed Abner. "If the Britishers set a light to my house and barn, they 'll get me right up and down rairin'. I shall jest snap

my halter, and off for the woods. And then, when the Yankees take to the woods, let 'em look out! Why, Square, I 've heerd my granther say that, when King Philip's Injuns was burnt out 'n their villages and wigwams, they fit wuss 'n ever. They tore round faster and ambushed offener and tomahawked deeper and skelped furder down. They fairly made New England yawp."

"Yes, Mr. Sly; and we 'll make the British lion yawp," said the veteran.

Abner was so flattered at being called Mister that he willingly ceded his joke to the Squire, and laughed noisily over it.

Now came another halt to bushwhack the invaders. But the English had decided that it was time to put a stop to these insolent ambuscades. Their advance platoon had deployed into a widespread skirmish line in the form of a crescent with the wings thrown forward.

"They 're larnin' to hunt," grumbled Abner. "I don't like the looks of that hossshoe, Square."

"We must get on one flank of it as quick as possible," said the old soldier.

They cantered onward until they reached a bend of the road where it entered a belt of forest. Here they stumbled upon a squad of patriots, five farmers in workaday costume and armed with fowling pieces, who were peering through the alder thickets which fringed the wood. One was a man as old as the Squire, with a dry dead-leaf complexion, a huge Roman nose, and a wilted mouth. Another, who seemed about thirty-five, had a fresh, glowing color, regular features, a singularly sweet smile, and an ex-

pression of purity akin to saintliness. Also there was a nut-brown sturdy nubbin of forty or more, standing between two nut-brown boys of eighteen and sixteen, evidently his sons.

They listened attentively to the Squire's hasty account of the tragedy at Lexington; and only when it was finished did they reveal the fact that they had heard it all before.

"Fact is, th' ain't been no skurcity of news," said the nut-brown farmer, in a high, rasping yell, as if he were addressing his oxen. "Doctor Prescott he went by 'bout dawning; an' sence then, plenty more."

"Why don't you get on to Concord and join your companies?" demanded the Squire.

The florid man smiled and replied, "That's what I've been seekin' to urge upon friend Tykewood," indicating the swarthy nubbin with a kindly glance. The contrast between his sweet, cultivated expression and his monotonous voice and rustic pronunciation was very striking.

"That's so," yelled Tykewood. "But fact is, the boys—Dave an' little Dan here—wanted to shute in our woods, an' foller it up all day."

The light gray eyes of Dave and Dan glittered in their sunburnt faces with a sly pugnacity which made them resemble weasels.

"That's a good plan, if you want the British to burn your house," said the Squire.

"Hey! ? ! ?" yelled Tykewood. "They don't burn folks'es housen, do they?"

"We must look for houses not made with hands," murmured the man with the angelic smile.

Then they all glanced at the Roman-nosed ancient,

as if for direction. He had had the air, again and again, of being about to speak; he had parted his withered lips and showed two or three tobacco-stained teeth; but the lips had closed without giving forth a sound. Now, still speechless, he suddenly shouldered his long firelock, nodded his grizzled head at the Farnlees, and set off toward Concord. The others followed him in single file, and on reaching the road they broke into a double, the ancient running as steadily as the youngsters.

"That 's the Injun trot," remarked Abner Sly, surveying the gait with satisfaction.

But he had no opportunity to repeat his customary lecture on redskin tactics, for the Farnlees had plunged into the forest and were making for the flank of the British vanguard. The party cantered for some minutes along a faintly marked cart-track, and emerged from the wood on the side nearest Lexington, but hidden from the road by a long ripple of land dotted with clumps of bushes. The Squire took off his cocked hat, rose in his stirrups, and peered over the knoll.

"It is a fine sight," he said, after a long look. "The reserve must have joined the advance. There are seven or eight hundred men there. Bless my soul, how I used to love that uniform! how proud I used to be to march into battle alongside of it! But now my duty is to fire upon it. If we could only make them halt and display! Our friends at Concord need time—time!"

He lifted his heavy rifle as if to fire, and then lowered it again to the pommel of his saddle, saying, "I am an old man, Asahel. I shall shoot better afoot. We will dismount and tie."

The beasts were soon haltered to some hickory saplings which grew in the shallow depression behind the knoll.

"This is a cruel duty," murmured the Squire as they took post for firing. "But we must defend the British Constitution."

"Which is my lobster, Square?" enquired Abner Sly, who was already taking sight across a grassy hummock.

"The nighest," advised the old gentleman. "I shall try for the next, Asahel for the third. If they recoil, we will reload; if they charge, we will mount. Now then, when you feel sure, fire."

"By jings! all down!" exulted Abner, as he dropped behind his hummock and fell to reloading.

Yes, the three nearest infantrymen were down, their scarlet uniforms staining the stinted April turf, and their comrades recoiling down the slope toward the highway. But in a minute a sergeant had rallied them, and they were advancing in skirmishing order toward the knoll, showing a line of fifteen or twenty firelocks. At a distance of perhaps one hundred yards this line halted and fired a volley.

"Shucks!" scoffed Abner as the bullets whistled over him, though in secret he drew a sigh of relief when they had got by. He picked out his prey, turned his hatchet face toward the Squire, and was waiting for a signal to fire, when he discovered something which made him call out, "Hi! look to the right."

Three mounted officers had left the main column, and were galloping across a long flat of meadow, obviously with the purpose of flanking the ambuscade.

"We must go," said the Squire. "We must get out of this before they see how few we are."

Then they discovered that Old Silver, that most unsuitable of beasts for mounted rifle service, had broken his halter and departed. It was a frightful moment, for the officers were coming on fast, and the infantry-men had quickened their pace. Abner Sly unloosed Dobbin, bounced into his saddle, and tore off for the wood without a glance behind.

"Asahel," said the Squire, "mount your horse and look for Old Silver."

It was a question between them (and of course both comprehended it perfectly) as to which should fall under the English sabres and bayonets.

"Mount yourself, father," replied Ash. "Then I will look for Old Silver."

But at this moment Abner Sly galloped toward them, leading the runaway steed by the bridle. They had barely time to get away at top speed when the foremost skirmishers showed their flushed faces over the knoll and hastily fired three or four harmless shots. Indeed, so near were they to our Yankee Parthians, that the latter distinctly heard one of them cry out, "Danged if it ain't that 'ere old Death on the Pale 'Orse again!"

CHAPTER X

SAVING THE STORES

WHEN the fugitives had got out of danger the Squire turned to Abner and said in his crisp, dry fashion, "That was a close shave, Mr. Sly,—a close shave for you, sir, as well as for us."

Vanity and modesty had a sharp struggle on the narrow ridges and in the abrupt hollows of Abner's sharp-edged countenance. He evidently felt that he had been profusely thanked and complimented. That "sir" from such a social grandee as Squire Farnlee, and the implication of gratitude which beamed from the veteran's unusually affable glance, were more than a Sly could bear without turning dizzy and looking foolish. For Abner belonged to the lowest caste of Massachusetts farmers, and represented with suitable hereditary meekness a long line of unrecorded rustics like unto himself, not one of whom ever owned a hide of land until the breed drifted across the Atlantic.

"One good turn deserves another," he mumbled, referring probably to the fact that the Squire had got him sworn into the Minute Men, an honor which he had vainly longed for in his own township. After an interval of vigorous tobacco chewing he broke into a noiseless chuckle and added, "That was a lofty Scrip-ter title they gin you, Square,—Death on the Pale

Horse! By gum, that 's a title a man can't git by bein' voted for in town-meetin'. A man 's got to ride and shute for it."

The old gentleman shook his head pensively without replying. The Biblical solemnity of the appellation had somewhat startled him, and roused in his conscience a scruple as to his right to undertake the mission of a destroyer. Once more he argued out to himself his defence for shooting redcoats. They were the only agents of Lord North, the only agents of the great conspiracy against English liberties, whom he could reach with his rifle. He must aim at them, or he could not hit tyranny at all. Yes, his cause and his action were just; and yet he did not like to be called Death on the Pale Horse; the epithet startled an old fellow who was depressed with physical weariness.

"We will amble on to Concord," he said huskily. "The beasts are too jaded for any more fighting work at present."

They rode for some distance in silence. Ash busied himself with marvelling over the tremendous change which had come upon his life within a few days. The calm, the gentleness, the scrupulousness of his youth were gone. All that morning he had faced death, and had sought to inflict death, like a professional bravo. By moments it seemed a dream; they must all be visions, the men who had fired at him, and the men whom he had shot; he should wake up presently, and they would fade from his memory.

Then he wondered that this blood-stained dream should not be horrible to him. It was not; not even strange. All at once he was wonted, brutalized, to

war. He felt as much at home in it as though he had passed his life in being shot at and in shooting others. Why had he never done it before ? Merely from lack of opportunity. Apparently combat was the natural state of man, and peace an enforced episode, the result of untoward circumstances. It did not take long to become a fighter and a veteran. Of course there were disagreeable moments in battle, although at *this* moment he was ashamed to admit it. He had cringed at Lexington when the British muskets blazed, and their bullets whistled over him. But what a pleasure it had been to fire back and see one of his enemies drop !

Why did he fight and slay ? an inner self (a self of other days) kept on enquiring. Was it for God and conscience ? he asked, remembering Warren's high sounding phrase. To his astonishment the words seemed to have no relation to his present feelings and conduct. Was it for revenge ? He had not thought of it ; all that morning he had scarcely once remembered that Englishmen were overbearing to provincials ; and, if he had brooded over Huldah Oakbridge's preference for Moorcastle, it was only at intervals. Because Britons shot at him he shot at them, and was glad when they fell. Moreover (and this was another powerful motive) he was ashamed to desert his comrades, and so forfeit their respect and his own.

It was broad daylight and bright sunshine when our three horsemen came upon a picket which had been posted about half a mile south of Concord. Several of the men hastened forward and asked eagerly, " Are they coming ? "

" Yes," said the Squire, with a yawn of senile weariness. " Eight hundred or a thousand strong."

More than one sunburnt visage took on a pinched expression. They had all hoped that somehow or other the king's troops would be led to stop short of Concord. One man gazed at the wearied and somnolent Squire with a nervous petulance which reproached him for being so hard-heartedly calm. Another broke forth in sudden excitement, "I begin to consider that this is high treason. I begin to consider that we ought to disperse and go home."

The Squire turned upon him with such a furious stare that he slunk aside like a threatened cur.

"There 's some on 'em coming in waggins," put in Abner Sly, patting his ducking-gun significantly.

"That so?" enquired a tall, florid youth, his face lighting up with a grin. "Been a-gunning for 'em? Hit any?"

"Beout three for my own bag," chuckled Abner. "The rest accordin' to quality," and he bobbed his head sidelong at the Farnlees.

Nearing the village, our trio came upon an officer in blue uniform, the commandant of the Concord Minute Men, Colonel Barret.

"The stores are pretty nigh all safe, Squire," he called out cheerfully. "All hands have worked like beavers since two o'clock." Then his face turned grave and his voice fell as he added, "That was an ugly business down at your place."

"It was a good business, Barret," returned the old soldier. "It gained you Concord people two hours. The English stopped all of that time to wait for their reserve and disarm the town. Moreover, it settled the question of fight or no fight. Resistance has begun, and Lexington is immortal in history."

"I suppose the bloodshed had to come," said Barret.
"Well, Concord owes Lexington thanks, and we won't forget it."

The village was a scene of turmoil: men and women and children toiling at the emptying of storehouses; wagons and ox-carts bearing off loads of tents, cartridge-boxes, canteens, and other military stores. On the Common two hundred militia had gathered: some of the officers calling the rolls of their companies; many of the men leaning on their firelocks or sitting on fences; others picking their flints or counting the bullets in their pouches; a rustic array with but a sprinkling of uniforms and not above a dozen bayonets.

The Squire glanced at the parade out of his cavernous eyes, and, turning into the barnyard gate of a large homestead, dismounted with a groan. "Feed the horses, Asahel," he said; "and then clean the guns;—Abner clean his."

He was so jaded that his speech was a nearly inarticulate mumble, and his gait a dragging shamble.

When Ash entered the house, some minutes later, the veteran was asleep in a chair, his towslod gray head aslant against the wall, his features sunken like those of a corpse, and his mouth wide open. In another chair, gazing at him while she knitted, sat a primly attired dame of about sixty, a tear on her hollow though ruddy cheek, and a serious smile on her twitching lips. The smile became sunny, and she held out her bony hand eagerly, when she saw the young man.

"Why! come in, Asahel," she chirruped. "Your father's here, resting a bit. Surely I'm glad the

Lord inclined your steps this way, although He has called us to meet in an hour of tribulation and terror, and He alone knows how it can be turned to our prosperity. Brother Dixwell seems to be clean tuckered out with his morning's warfare," she continued, turning her tearful yet cheerful eyes upon the snoring Squire. "Really, Asahel, I do conceive and hold that he is too far advanced in years to be unsheathing the sword and rushing into battle. But how remarkably he does favor father! Perhaps you don't remember your father; I mean your grandfather. I am getting so old that I mix up all the generations, as though I was eternity itself and looked upon time as a speck. Yes, Brother Dixwell, as he sits there, is father in the flesh; meaning as father was in the decline of life. And surely he is too elderly for fighting: but I suppose you can't hinder him: it's in the blood. And my husband too——"

Here she suddenly wept a little, and as suddenly dried her tears.

"*He* is out there," she resumed, "parading with the young men and making ready for the strife. I said to him, when he was getting on his accoutrements, 'Now, Jared Mildmay,' says I, 'you are *not* vigorous enough for this kind of capering.' But you know, Asahel, how stubborn the deacon is, especially when he thinks he has a call to some trying duty. And so he is out there waiting for the fray," she sobbed out, breaking down for just a moment. "And pretty soon they will be a-shooting, and perhaps we shall have a massacre like that one in Lexington, and very likely the town afire. Well, God's will be done! I suppose men must strike for the right, especially if they are

Christian men and leaders in the church, no matter what befalls. Are the king's troops surely arriving upon us, Asahel?"

"They can scarcely be more than two miles away, Aunt Mehitable. Do you mean to stay here? You may get hit by a chance bullet."

"The Lord will decide that," she answered, sobbing again. "I mean to stay where I can care for husband and brother, if they are brought in. We have got everything ready in the house,—lint and bandages and diachylum. If I am smitten myself, Asahel, I trust that I am prepared. I am trying hard to trust the Lord, and by moments I feel that I do. It would be a poor upshot to a profession of forty years, if I should lose my grip on faith at the first solemn call to have faith."

She was crying so violently now that her utterance became unintelligible. When she could speak once more, she added, "Whatever be the Lord's sentence, I shall await it here. I have had it borne in upon me that this is my place wherein to await it."

Asahel was troubled by this grief and this devoutness. He rose hastily, saying, "I must learn how near the British are. It won't do to let them come upon father."

"That's right," nodded the old lady, smiling cheerfully all of a sudden. "Take care of father; take care of Brother Dixwell. I have some hot coffee and breakfast for you when you want; though to be sure Brother Dixwell said you had all been nourished; he is a forethoughted man, your father is;—the longest-headed one of the old breed."

Ash went forth on his scout, but soon returned in

great haste. The air was full of warlike tidings; the picket had fired an alarm volley; the meeting-house bell was tolling; the foe was at hand. The uproar awoke the Squire; but he did not at first seem to know where he was; he asked in a thick voice, "Has the minister come?"

"Ah, Brother Dixwell! the bell ain't ringing for holy service," said Aunt Mehitable, laughing and crying all together.

"I was dreaming of Almira's funeral," he explained as he struggled to his feet—"your mother's funeral, Asahel."

"We must hurry, sir," said Asahel. "Colonel Barret will not defend the village, and is marching for the other side of the river."

The veteran drank a cup of coffee, shook his sister by the hand, and said tranquilly, "Good bye, Mehitable," while she wiped her eyes and answered with a quavering voice, "Good bye, Brother Dixwell."

Then he mounted and rode off with his train, very ill-humored when he learned that Barret had abandoned a quantity of stores, including three twenty-four pounders, eight thousand musket bullets, and sixty barrels of flour. He was so absorbed by this evil news that he showed no sympathy with the white-faced women and crying children who were running for the fields or barring themselves into their homes.

"Never mind," he said at last. "The stores will occupy the British while Massachusetts collects her men. Asahel, if Essex County does its duty, not a redcoat of that array will march back to Boston, or I know nothing of warfare. Your aunt looks very hearty, does n't she? Really quite chirk and youthful."

Ere long they overtook the straggling column of Minute Men. It marched to the North Bridge, crossed the lazy, sedgy, winding Concord River, and climbed a gentle eminence which fronted it at a distance of some fifty rods. There the rustic soldiers halted, formed line facing the bridge, grounded arms, and broke into groups. Their countenances, and the few words they interchanged, showed that they were depressed and mortified. To retreat at the mere report of the enemy's coming! to give up the village and the heavy cannon without firing a shot! It seemed to these novices in warfare mere poltroonery, and they thought that Concord was disgraced forever.

They knew not what to say, and they knew still less what to do. They stared glumly at the village, only a mile distant and broadly visible. They could distinctly see a river of scarlet, sparkling with bayonets, pouring along the main street; and when they kept quiet, they could hear the monotonous roll of the drums and the thin, petulant squeak of the fifes. Presently the scarlet filled the Common, and then spatters of it dribbled away in various directions, no doubt the detachments which were to destroy the stores and picket the bridges.

Within a few minutes two columns emerged from the village; one moving down the straight road which led to the South Bridge, and one taking the curving road to the North Bridge; the first consisting of three companies under Captain Parsons, and the second of three companies under Captain Lawrie.

The Americans ran to arms and formed line. Would the English cross the river and storm the hill? There was a dissension between the timid and the audacious,

between the men of legality and the men of action. A few wanted to retreat; a few wanted to dash forward and seize the bridges; the great majority were simply puzzled and irresolute.

"We have no right to fire till we have been fired on," was perhaps the most common judgment. Of course the great majority called to mind the fact that they were only a handful out of the population of the colonies. Was it certain that their brethren in New York and Virginia and the Carolinas would back them, if they provoked a conflict with the crown?

We citizens of the great republic can but dimly conceive the perplexities and anxieties of those born English subjects who stood on that hill debating in their plain farmer minds whether they should open the American Revolution. The fear of facing the advancing bayonets was a trifle as compared with the fear of confronting the charge of high treason.

The men in the scarlet columns had no such responsibilities and doubts. They limped steadily forward on their blistering feet, now and then changing their muskets from one tired shoulder to the other, attentive to the word of command and to little else. Parsons crossed the South Bridge, skirted the right flank of the American position, and pushed on toward the farm of Colonel Barret. Lawrie halted at the North Bridge, and sent a picket across to guard the western end. Not a shot was fired, nor was there a summons to disperse. What could law-abiding Yankees do?

"They are going to your house, Colonel," many voices cried. "They are going to smash up the gun-carriages."

"I want them to commit some overt act," mumbled

the puzzled and worried Barret. "It's a great responsibility, ordering subjects to fire on the king's troops."

"How as to Lexington?" demanded Squire Farnlee. "Did they commit no overt acts there?"

"That was in another jurisdiction," urged a stout, flabby-faced gentleman who had the air of a justice. "That was not in the township of Concord."

Barret said nothing, but he looked grateful. Then, hearing a sniff of scorn from Squire Farnlee, he walked away by himself, glanced after the column which was trudging toward his house, and drew a profound sigh. Never, in all his decent agricultural life, had he known or imagined such an hour of trouble.

In this deadlock of legality, the crisis remained for more than two hours. The Americans gazed down from their hill on Lawrie's troop; they could see the men of the picket nibbling at their rations and dusting their black gaiters; they could count the steps of the sentry as he paced composedly to and fro. There was much futile talk among the youngsters concerning the possibility of hitting this particular "lobster." Presently the voice of an elder would murmur, "Be keerful, boys,—no firing till we're fired on." And then the boys would growl; perhaps in a spirit of honest combativeness; perhaps in conscious, or unconscious, shamming thereof.

Meantime re-enforcements arrived: companies from Carlisle, Chelmsford, Weston, Littleton, Acton, and other towns: loose stragglings of yeomen whose soiled shoes and red faces showed that they had marched far and fast. But these organizations were small, for only the very zealous had responded to the brazen alarum

of the morning, and thus it was nearly ten o'clock before the array on the hill numbered five hundred firelocks.

Then a wordy mutiny broke out against the law-abiding conservatism of Barret. A cry arose that the British were burning the town, and hundreds of angry eyes stared at a smoke which piled up fleecily from the Common, and two or three of the companies ran to arms. It was soon discovered, indeed, that no building was aflame. Parties of soldiers could be seen rolling and dragging heavy articles toward the blaze; and the pacific-minded among the militiamen said loudly, "Oh, it 's just the barrels of wooden spoons."

But presently the liberty pole was cut down, and its sacred timber added to the exasperating bonfire.

"How much more are we to endure?" shouted Adjutant Joseph Hosmer, jumping out in front of the battalion. "We are citizens of this province. Some of us are citizens of Concord. We have a right to enter it. We have a right to cross that bridge. Let us go down there and claim the right. Who will follow me?"

"I," answered Captain Isaac Davis of Acton. "I have n't a man that 's afraid to go."

CHAPTER XI

THE DISCORD AT CONCORD

THERE was no military purpose or hope of utility in the American advance. It was not strong enough to beat the English force, and a combat would but imperil the village. But the men needed to vindicate their manhood; they were ashamed to stand so far away from the redcoats; they wanted to dare them to fire.

About three hundred broke away from the deadlock on the hill, and streamed down across the meadows toward the North Bridge, marching in double file with trailed arms. At their approach Lawrie's picket ran back to the middle of the bridge, and began to take up the gray, warped planks of the well-worn flooring. Major Buttrick, a citizen of Concord, sprang forward and ordered them to desist. They glanced at him with grave, enquiring eyes; then they turned their faces rearward, as if listening to some order from their own officer; then they composedly replaced the planks and retired to the south side of the river.

Meantime the Americans formed line, the captains shouting to halt and front in their various untrained voices, and the men stumbling into their places and coming to an order. For a minute or so the two arrays stared at each other in silence across the narrow,

sluggish stream. The leaders on both sides were in a state of extreme perplexity.

Captain Lawrie, a short, high-shouldered man, with a pucker of worry on his broad, freckled face, ran his gray eyes along the front of the Americans, and then mounted a stump to peer up the course of the river. Like many another subordinate officer on detached command (and many a general, too, for that matter), he felt called on to take some energetic step, and did not know what it ought to be. At last he decided that he must get the provincials out of their position, in order to leave a free field for the return of Parsons' detachment. His blond face suddenly flushed, and he shouted in a long-drawn bellow one of those utterances which make history, but which nevertheless history fails to catch.

Did he cry, "Clear that road, or I shall fire!"—or did he simply command, "Fire!"?

Apparently his own men did not understand him. They sent two shots up the river; then three or four across, wounding Luther Blanchard and Jonas Brown; then a straggling volley, killing Captain Isaac Davis and Abner Hosmer. The Americans stood unresisting, as if stupefied, until Major Buttrick leaped into the air and yelled, "Fire, fellow-citizens! For God's sake, fire!"

In wild haste, and with the bad aim of excited men, the provincial volley was delivered. Three English soldiers fell dead, and several left the ranks bleeding. On neither side was there any further hesitation; the firing continued smartly for some minutes; the War of Independence had begun.

Ere long Lawrie retreated from a position which the

marksmanship of his adversaries rendered untenable except at heavy cost. Re-enforcements were hurried forward to support him, but he formed line about four hundred yards in front of the village and stood on the defensive, a more than ordinarily undirected and puzzled gallant officer, shaking his sandy head over the incomprehensibility of colonial affairs.

Then the strangest imaginable truce drifted into this half-meant combat. The Americans were even more perplexed than Captain Lawrie. They had recovered their bridge; they had stood fire and proved to themselves that they were not cowards; and now their impulses and provocations to fighting seemed to have vanished.

"If the British would 'a' kep' on shooting, we 'd 'a' knowed what to do," said a ruddy, hard-featured farmer to a comrade. He spoke in the vague, depressed fashion of a man who has suddenly lost his purpose in life.

Squire Farnlee was not thus hard up for motives of action. He remembered with cast-iron distinctness that there was an unsettled question of constitutional law between the colonies and the mother country. While he knew that the provincials were not strong enough to drive the English from the village, he did believe that they might capture the force which had marched to Barret's farm, and he pleaded for this enterprise until his voice became husky and almost inaudible.

Buttrick and a few other officers approved, but the mass of the men listened as if they heard not. They seemed to have lost all power of being stirred by any sound but the whistling of hostile bullets. They stood

at gaze, or loitered about like bees deprived of their queen; or, if they attended to anything, it was not to the pressing business of the day. Some carried off the dead and wounded; some seated themselves in sheltered spots to gossip, or to smoke; some sauntered across the bridge to stare at the English slain; a few lay down to sleep.

Into the midst of this somnolent armistice trotted and panted Captain Parsons with the confounded air of a man who has heard that his house is afire, and finds it standing. He had burnt the gun-carriages, refreshed his men on Colonel Barret's pork and cabbages, and granted them an hour of much-needed repose. Then, hearing the firing, he had hasted back on the double, manfully taking the river road so as to reach the North Bridge and succor Lawrie. And now here he was, with less than one hundred and fifty men, in the midst of at least five hundred rebel sharpshooters.

The Americans might perhaps have destroyed or captured his entire detachment. But they quietly shuffled aside and ceded the way to the weary and breathless redcoats. "Let these men pass," they muttered to each other; "these men have n't yet fired on us."

It was the last utterance that day of the pacific, law-abiding spirit of the king's subjects in his province of Massachusetts.

Captain Parsons, a red-faced, iron-gray veteran, very puffy just now with his double-quick, looked almost comically bewildered. He evidently did not know what regulations and articles of war applied to the present crisis. These peasants had been firing on his Majesty's troops; and ought not he, Parsons, to give

them the British bayonet? But, on the other hand, considering all the blasted circumstances, political and military, he was well pleased to put off fighting a bit. He was in a trap; that was the long and short of it, by Jupiter; and he could not help wanting to save his three companies. He trotted on at the head of his column, keeping his brown eyes on the swarm of Yankees, thinking occasionally what a fine grenadier some tall fellow would make, scowling defiantly when he encountered a stare which seemed to him pugnacious, but on the whole wearing an expression which said as plainly as words, "You let me alone, and I'll let you alone."

It was a glad moment to him when the feet of his leading files banged on to the bridge, and a still gladder one when the feet of the rearmost files quitted it. He stopped to see them all over, and then waddled on after them, holding his right fist to his breast in good style, and keeping his scabbard from between his thick legs with the left hand, a valiant little gentleman of right loyal principles, but cursing Lord North and the colonies together with what breath was left him.

There was no halt to pick up Lawrie's dead, nor even to carry off his wounded. The double-quick did not end until the three companies had formed up with the other redcoats under cover of the Reverend Mr. Emerson's parsonage, where long afterward Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote his fine verses about the battle.

These men of Parsons' detachment were extremely weary. They had marched, since the previous midnight, twenty-five miles; but twenty more must be done before they would be safe in Boston. Colonel Smith, the British commandant, allowed two hours

longer for rest, and then, a little after noon, commenced his retreat.

The American swarm now awoke from its lethargy, and streamed loosely across the river in pursuit. But on the southern bank there was a halt, and a cluttering of solemnized men by the wayside, all staring at something in silence or with low exclamations.

"What is all this?" shouted Squire Farnlee. "Push on, neighbors. We are wasting precious time."

"Look a' that, Square!" said Abner Sly, leaning forward on the pommel of his saddle and craning over the heads of the footmen.

The Squire craned also, and saw three redcoated soldiers lying side by side, piteously white and still. One of them, pock-marked and snub-nosed, had a hole in his low forehead, and a streak of blood drawn from it to one temple. Another, a comely-featured youngster, his glassy blue eyes wide open, had a great dark stain in his scarlet coat, just below the left breast. Both these men wore such a placid expression as if they had merely fallen asleep. But the third man, a Hercules in build, with a large shapeless face, was horrible to see. He had the bloody mark of a bullet in his throat, and he also had a deep, raw cleft in the midst of his powdered hair, while his eyes stared fiercely and his mouth was distorted as if with agony or rage.

"Who tomahawked that soldier?" thundered the Squire. "It is an outrage."

A little old man in ragged citizen costume looked up and exclaimed in a piping voice, "My son Billy did it."

"Your son Billy ought to be hung," roared the Squire. "He is an enemy to humanity and to these provinces."

"But you see my son Billy was scart," squeaked the old man. "He came up to look at the redcoat, and the redcoat begin for to git up; and then Billy he took a fright and hit him with a hatchet. Seems to me 't would be hard to hang Billy for a redcoat," concluded the old fellow, looking around appealingly.

"I don't see the difference between one piece of iron and another," added a voice. "The British bayoneted our wounded at Lexington."

The Squire was about to reply, but Ash touched him on the shoulder. "Father," he said, "I think that is the man who finished Rob Monroe."

"Ah—well," nodded the veteran, "it is the vengeance of God. Never mind about silly Billy. Tell him to go and enlist in the British army."

"For a ginral, or for a private?" enquired Abner Sly, and with a feeble chuckle of laughter the group broke up.

Then the pursuit straggled onward, swarming athwart the fields to reach the flank of the retiring column, and rapidly dissolving into a wide-spread cloud of guerrilla warfare. Whoever wanted to hunt the redcoats did so, and did it in just such fashion as he fancied. Colonels, and captains, and privates went a-gunning in company, and on a footing of equality. It was as if a whole population had turned out to track a wild beast.

The firing began east of Concord, near the junction with the Bedford road; and from there on to Lexington every woodland, and rock, and hayrick was a pos-

sible ambush. As fast as one squad of pursuers exhausted its ammunition, another arrived with full powder-horns and bullet-pouches. Companies ran in successively from Reading, from Billerica, from East Sudbury, and other townships. In Lincoln the thickets and stone walls were alive with skirmishers. Scarce ten of the Americans were ever seen at once, yet their bullets sometimes whistled in volleys. The stinging swarm was in front, and on the rear, and on the flanks, an omnipresent torment, sparsely visible, but incessantly felt.

Ere long there was not a soldier or officer in any part of the scarlet column who felt sure that he would march another yard. Every few minutes a ball, or perhaps several, hissed spitefully between the files, or struck with that cruel, sickening *chuck* which the veteran knows so well. Then a man uttered a scream, or a groan, and dropped like a sack; or he reeled against some comrade and was helped forward a few steps, soon to be laid by the roadside and left there panting and turning white; or, if a country wagon could be seized, he was hastily lifted into it and driven jolting over the wretched road, moistening it with drops of his blood.

This perpetual presence of an invisible death seemed to the men more trying than violent, open battle. They marched with the lurking gait of hunted wolves, casting around them anxious and savage glances. A few crouched so that the officers swore at them and ordered them angrily to stand up. But the very tone of the command, its eager impatience and indignation, revealed nervous suffering. For everybody was jaded and worried, with fatigue as well as with anxiety. In

scarcely any of those eight hundred faces was there an expression of high resolve; usually there was a stolid, sullen, blinking patience, like that of a hardly bested bulldog; or there was the desperate scowl of a cat driven into a corner. Nearly every countenance also revealed a stony, unpitying egotism. Each man who saw another hit felt a sort of gladness because that bullet at least had missed himself.

Of the many trials of battle there is no greater than that of being under fire without returning it. Think what it is to be merely struck at with some slight weapon, such as a whip, without opportunity to ward off, or to strike back. But when the weapon is a bullet, who can help a desire to evade it?

Moreover, a retreat, even when ordered and in order, is always disheartening. Men appear to have a special horror of being hit in the back. If they must move rearward under fire, it is hard to make them move calmly; their instinctive impulse is to run and get at once beyond reach of blows; they may become quite steady when they face about, but not till then.

With the English it was a retreat, and death from behind. Disciplined as were these old soldiers, they found the situation horrible. If they could have seen a broad, open line of enemies, they would probably have cheered with joy. But to be hunted by invisible creatures; to be slain by spits of smoke out of thickets and tufts of herbage; to find every tree and boulder—all a landscape—thirsting for their blood—it became every minute more unbearable. When they were allowed to fire back, they did it with a vindictive, furious eagerness which defeated its own purpose. At Merriam's Corner they poured a roaring volley into

an ambuscaded company without hitting a man. At Hardy's Hill they did better, drawing some blood, though losing more.

By this time the column had been harried into rabid cruelty. If the flankers saw a Yankee fall, they sprang recklessly forward to finish him, and they lacerated him with repeated bayonetings. Sometimes one would drop while thus wreaking his vengeance; and then his comrades would take warning and fly at speed; the two foes remaining side by side, all of a sudden at peace.

To these jaded and worried redcoats one of the most disquieting visitations of their horrible march was the frequent reappearance of a tall, gaunt, white-headed pursuer, mounted on a white horse. Every few minutes he galloped up within thirty rods of the rearmost files, halted his raw-boned steed, levelled his long rifle, fired, and fled. But before he could turn and bend in his saddle some soldier had perhaps dropped with outspread arms in the road, or was leaning in a sickly way against a comrade. The men of the rearguard cringed and wanted to break ranks whenever they saw this hoary rider careering after them.

Two other cavaliers also made themselves hatefully familiar to the soldiers. One was a tall, swarthy youth on a handsome sorrel; the other, a tow-headed, hatchet-faced rustic on a paunchy bay. These two were always on the flanks, making sly circuits from one covert to another, and firing with impunity at long range. It was hard to say whether the shrill rifle of the one, or the clamorous ducking-gun of the other did the most damage to the column. The flankers charged after them, and laid ambushes for them, with-

out avail. The two Parthians slipped away, reloading as they cantered through the meadows, to recommence their slaughtering work from behind the next angle of forest. It was a ball from the rifle that unhorsed Major Pitcairn at Lincoln Crossroads; and it was a slug from the ducking-gun that pierced Colonel Smith's leg at Fiske's Corner.

Nothing but inveterate discipline, perhaps nothing but the fear of a thousand lashes for misbehavior, kept the harried English from breaking into a swarm of fugitives. Twice, a sort of trembling seized the column, and it started to run like a drove of scared horses. Then the officers had to hold it by main strength, collaring the soldiers and striking with their rapiers, meantime yelling reproaches and curses. The men resumed their ranks and their regular pace with a worried air. They tried to excuse themselves; they declared that they had heard an order to double, and appealed to each other if it were not so; perhaps they really believed it.

At times the Colonel ordered the music to play; the haggard drummers and fifers shrilled out gay measures which contrasted strangely with their blistered feet and anxious hearts; and for a time the hundreds of black gaiters moved in unison. But presently the firing grew sharp; stricken men cried out and dropped, and were left; the waltzes were silenced by the crash and surging of combat; the men fired, with or without orders, at random; the panic came uppermost again. It seemed at certain moments as if the whole force would be driven to surrender.

At Lexington there was a prolonged skirmish. The Americans, posted behind houses and stone walls,

rattled their bullets and slugs into the column as it entered the village. The English struck out furiously in retaliation, fronting and firing volleys by company, charging at a run upon the ambuscaders, burning half a dozen buildings, and bayoneting every man who fell. They lost more than their disorderly adversaries, but they eventually drove them to a distance.

While the soldiers were fighting for a minute's peace, Colonel Smith had his wound dressed. He was in worry of mind, not over his leg, but over his detachment. During his morning halt at Lexington, disquieted by the unexpected collision and bloodshed, he had sent an officer back to Gage for a re-enforcement. Now he regretted that he had not despatched two or three messengers and a more earnest request.

"Good God! I hope Eastwold got to Boston," he said to Pitcairn. A minute or two later he added, "My God! we can't linger here. These dem'd peasants are fairly swarming around us. I should think they dropped from the clouds."

And soon, all too soon for the jaded infantry, came the order, "Adjutant, call in the guards and form column for march."

The footsore men limped into their places, and set forth with their habitual stony composure. There had been a talk among them of coming help, and it was clear from their faces that they were much cheered. But scarcely had they got outside the village before they began to lose their confidence, for no approaching re-enforcement was visible, and the ambuscaded torment was fiercer than ever. It seemed as though the bullets which sang out from behind thicket, and wall, and boulder demanded the blood of the last one of

them. The jaded, drawn, dust-begrimed countenances of these almost exhausted veterans gradually became gloomier and more desperate. They had found their march of six miles from Concord a severe trial. How could they endure to run this gauntlet of fire for fourteen miles farther? The bravest cohort in the world flinches at the prospect of perishing by slow torture.

Of a sudden there came an uncontrollable stampede; the column broke into a double-quick and ran for a considerable distance. The commands, the entreaties, the blasphemies, and the blows of the officers were all useless. The men kept together; they remained in the highway; they held on to their arms; but run they would. At last the officers rushed to the front, formed a line across the road, and, presenting their rapiers, threatened death to whomsoever should attempt to pass. The breathless troops halted; the panic came to an end in a minute; the column fell into shape instinctively; and the woeful ranks stumbled on as before.

CHAPTER XII

CAPTAIN MOORCASTLE AND PRIVATE FARNLEE

AT last, on the high ground near Monroe's Tavern, half a mile south of Lexington, the retreating English discovered the longed-for re-enforcement. There was an involuntary quickening of speed, followed by a panting struggle up the long slope; and then Smith's soldiers burst running into Percy's hollow square and threw themselves on the ground, their tongues lolling out of their parched mouths. Twenty-five miles they had marched, and some of them near to thirty-two, during the last fourteen hours. No doubt many of them felt that it would be more tolerable to surrender, or to die fighting, than to make the remaining fourteen miles of their journey.

The long, narrow, aquiline, gentle face of Earl Percy showed compassion and dismay as he gazed upon these jaded soldiers. How could he get them in safety to Boston? He had marched out to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*; would he be driven back to the tune of *Chevy Chase*?

"We are all very glad to see you, m' lud," said Colonel Smith in the hoarse voice of a well used-up commander.

"Better late than never," returned Percy. "There was a series of blunders in getting the troops ready.

But never mind about that. Here we are, twelve hundred men and two pieces; I think we shall be enough for the business."

"None too many, m' lud. The Yankees are monstrous numerous."

Percy turned his long, thin nose and mild eyes around the landscape, scanning the groups of provincials who were watching the square from various points, like vultures waiting for a wounded beast to leave its covert. "It is two o'clock past," he said. "We can't give you much time to rest."

"Very true," nodded the Colonel, who was leaning a little awry to keep his weight off his wounded leg, and drawing down one corner of his mouth in unconscious acknowledgment of the pain. "The longer we wait, the worse we shall fare. These fellows seem to drop from the clouds."

The order for march was soon given. The two howitzers bellowed once toward Lexington as a warning against trespassers; and some of Smith's people raised a voluntary cheer, as hardly bested soldiers often do over the noise of their own cannon. The fresh troops took the front and rear, and the scarlet array set forward. It was many minutes before the skirmishing recommenced; for the Americans, like all inexperienced fighters, dreaded cannon more than musketry; and moreover, numbers of them, wearied with the chase, or having expended their ammunition, had turned their faces homeward. The men of Smith's detachment found a particular pleasure in losing sight of certain figures which they had seen oftener than they had wanted to. The old man on the white horse, for instance, had ceased to haunt the rear.

"He don't want to put his rack o' bones within reach of grape," said one soldier.

"I'd like to feel the heft av his carkiss on me bagonet," returned an Irishman.

There was a little laugh in the ranks, and the men limped along the easier. The temporary cessation of the skirmishing had quickly restored their habitual, hardened cheerfulness. Already they were thoughtless of the many scores of comrades left behind, the dead, and the dying, and the sorely wounded, the stragglers whom they supposed to be murdered. It was not they, at any rate, who would have to bury them. A soldier's life is so full of violent emotions that he cannot keep any one emotion long; a ball which has passed is instantly forgotten, and a comrade who has fallen is forgotten likewise.

The men just arrived from Boston were fairly fresh and quite cheerful. They held the post of danger, and were for the moment glad to do so. They were disposed to laugh at their jaded comrades for having retired so hastily before a flock of farmers. Veterans as they were, and knowing full well what a serious thing battle is, they were rather anxious for a brush with the natives, if only to show Smith's fellows how to do it. Even the officers of the line companies strutted a little more than usual because the grenadiers and light infantry had been pretty smartly pestered.

Among the mounted notables who had arrived with Percy was Moorcastle. His black eyes had their characteristic stare, and his dark face showed as many cranberry spots as ever; but in some other respects he was not the same person with the unconsciously domineering autocrat of the Oakbridge dinner-table. It

was obvious that he would not treat a British officer as insolently as he had felt free to treat civilian Yankees. It was obvious, too, that he was on duty, and was taking his duty seriously.

Presently he rode alongside of Pitcairn, who had been remounted on the horse of an orderly.

"Ah, how de do, Captain?" said the Major, with that cordiality which few officers deny to a fellow who belongs to the general's staff. "Glad to see you along with us. But how could the little Boston beauty let you come away?"

Moorcastle perceived that Pitcairn was toadying to him, and he was quite shrewd enough to divine the reason why. The poor gentleman undoubtedly felt painfully responsible for the beginning of this day's bloody business, and was clearly anxious to secure a favorable report at headquarters. The appeal had its flattery, and Moorcastle responded to it with a civil joke.

"The beauty was n't consulted," he said. "The General sometimes forgets to ask her advice."

The Major haw-hawed: "Capital!—very good, that!—forgets to ask her advice!—very good."

It was pathetic to see how eager the veteran was to please this young staff-officer. "Charming little girl," he added, not knowing what better to say. "I hope she 'll prove as good as she looks."

"Oh, she 'll do—for a while," grinned the Captain with honest hard-heartedness, altogether unaware that his hardness was unattractive, and indeed supposing the contrary.

"Oh!" said Pitcairn, who had too many daughters to like the speech.

Moorcastle now entered upon the business which Gage had confided to him. "By the way," he resumed, "his Excellency is very anxious to be able to prove that this brush was not commenced by the king's troops. You understand, of course, Major, the great importance of that point. Those fellows in Parliament, you know—"

"Certainly I do," said Pitcairn, understanding it all at once better than he had before. "And I am so exceeding glad to tell you about it. Why! unquestionably the Yankees fired first. The very first man that I saw fire was a peasant behind a wall to my left, who let drive at me personally and wounded my horse. Then, very naturally, my soldiers broke out. I could n't stop them. I shouted, 'Cease firing'; I gestured with my cane; I slapped it down, you comprehend. But it was still darkish; and there was such a doose of an uproar, both sides firing!—really it was impossible to stop it."

"Ah—very good—" Moorcastle's face was still grave, and he did not seem convinced. "I hope you will make a strong case on that point," he continued. "His Excellency is exceedingly anxious to show that we were not the aggressors."

"Why, Captain!" the Major cried out. "Why, good heavens! what do you take me for? Am I—an old fellow with eleven children—am I the sort of man for violent counsels? Have I the reputation of loving blood and severity? You know the name I bear among the soldiers; you know what they call me—Father Pitcairn."

This was not quite to the point, and Moorcastle's hard face still showed a worried expression, the reflec-

tion probably of the worries of his major-general. Then it occurred to Pitcairn that he had brought great trouble of mind upon others, and very many others, as well as upon himself.

"One cannot always be sure how a skirmish began," he said meekly. "A man sometimes remembers *B* for *A*. But what I tell you is the business as I saw it; and I will stand to my statement before the proper tribunal. If the word of a British officer is insufficient, I will add my oath."

"Thank you, Major," returned Moorcastle with a gentleness and courtesy which would have amazed Ash Farnlee. And, raising his hand in salute, he trotted away with a contented face, for he had got the statement that his general wanted.

He had just reached the head of the column when Lord Percy said to him, "I want you to ride ahead, Captain, and see what the advance is about."

Moorcastle, glad of a little active work, galloped forward to the vanguard. The chief of it explained to him that he was going into skirmish-line because there were signs of an ambuscade in a thicket two hundred yards in front. Just then a puff of smoke broke from the thicket, and a ball sang with a curious leisurely hum over Moorcastle's head, severely bruising a sergeant behind him who was superintending the deployment. In the next moment a single horseman, mounted on a pudgy bay, emerged from the hostile covert and cantered off, insolently following the high-road. Moorcastle leaned over the pommel of his saddle and dashed away in pursuit.

Abner Sly, looking back over one bony shoulder, perceived that he must ride for a skulking-place. He

lashed Dobbin to the top speed of his mustang lope, and made for a farmhouse which lay three or four hundred yards farther on, purposing either to find a shelter behind its enclosures, or to join some ambuscaded comrade there. Of course the farmhouse had a barn, and naturally a barnyard alley led up to it, with a broad, swinging gate at the highway entrance. Abner wheeled into this alley; pushed to the gate behind him; galloped on forty or fifty yards; let down a set of bars and got over them; put them up again and remounted—all this just in time to save his pelt.

After him came Moorcastle, dashing through the gate with a fiery whirl, and jostling it so violently that it rebounded from a sapling behind it. He heard it close and latch, but did not think of it at the moment, so eager was he in his chase. Pistol in hand, he galloped on to the bars, but they were too high to leap. He fired and missed; then with all possible speed he fired his second pistol; but the fleeing Yankee, lying flat on his horse, got away safe.

At that moment Moorcastle heard a voice of doom shout hoarsely, "Surrender!"

He turned and saw a second mounted Yankee, not more than thirty or forty feet distant, but separated from him by a picket fence, the enclosure of the farmer's vegetable garden. He was a tall young fellow with a high color in his swarthy cheeks, and a flashing black eye which looked steadily along a rifle-barrel. He had on a blue uniform coat, and his hands and mouth were smeared with powder; but Moorcastle at once recognized him as the youth whom he had met at the Oakbridge table. Oh, how distinctly, in that unblest moment, he remembered him and all that had

passed between them ! his own arrogance as to the question of Yankee feebleness and cowardice ! his insolent kiss upon the cheek of that half-willing, silly girl ! and the ghastly grief with which this youth had beheld it !

" How dare you, sir ! " he shouted, though he felt that the exclamation was ridiculous, and expected to die before he could finish it.

But Farnlee had also recollected Moorcastle. His face turned white much quicker than if he had received a bullet in his heart. He seemed to be paralyzed at the sight of this man who had wrought him by far the greatest harm and woe that he had ever received from mortal. He wanted to shoot him, and yet he could not. All day he had looked for him with the purpose of killing him ; and now that he had him under his hand, that hand would not draw the trigger ; it could slay in battle, but it could not commit murder.

Meantime the young Englishman—longing to escape and knowing that he could not—cringing at the thought of a ball in his back and preferring to take it in his breast—sat upright in his saddle staring at the American. Of a sudden, and in a voice of stern command, the latter shouted, " Dismount ! "

Moorcastle hoped that he was to be let off with the loss of his horse. He instantly obeyed the order, and as he touched the earth a spiteful whistle passed over his head, the sound of a ball coming from the field beyond the bars. Instinctively he glanced in that direction, and saw the Yankee on the bay horse reloading, evidently intent on further shooting. And then Moorcastle found himself at liberty, for the tall young provincial in uniform made him a signal to depart, and at once rushed away at a gallop.

"Well?" enquired Lord Percy when the Captain rejoined him.

"There were two of them, m' lud," replied Moorcastle. "But they disappeared," he presently remembered to add, for his adventure had made him absent-minded.

"You are not hit, I hope," said Percy, eying him steadily.

Moorcastle reddened with shame at the suspicion that he might be pale. "No, m' lud," he mumbled. "We wasted two or three shots on each other; that was all."

Then he dropped rearward to escape further catechising, and ere long bethought himself to reload his pistols, meanwhile pondering anew over his brief captivity and strange escape, and muttering in a mortified whisper, "The devil!—the devil!"

He needed his pistols more than once before reaching Boston. Two miles below Lexington the skirmishing recommenced, and raged for four hours around the suffering, retaliating column. Nearly every one of the various woodlands which touched upon the road was a scene of clamorous bush-fighting. At West Cambridge musketry and cannon roared for many minutes, the provincials being rallied and cheered on by Colonel Heath and Joseph Warren, and the latter receiving a ball through his curled hair. The English fought with rage and vindictiveness; houses were plundered and burned, and helpless people slain; the bayonet spared no one who fell. Percy and other officers, even the hard-tempered Moorcastle, strove in vain to restrain the embittered soldiers.

The bridge at Cambridge had been taken up, and

this enforced a long detour by way of Charlestown. It was a continuous combat with swarms of militiamen from Roxbury, Dorchester, Milton, and other neighboring townships. A fierce skirmish at Prospect Hill, the flashes of the guns showing red through the gathering night, ended this first battle-day of the American Revolution.

Heath forbade farther pursuit lest the British should burn Charlestown; and Percy's exhausted men stumbled on in peace to Bunker Hill, where they went into bivouac. They had lost sixty-five killed, one hundred and eighty wounded, and twenty-eight unhurt prisoners, in all two hundred and seventy-three. In return they had wounded thirty-nine provincials and killed forty-nine.

Ash Farnlee, too tired to return home, passed the night with Abner Sly. Even Abner was so far worn out that he could not relate half his deeds of daring to his amazed and delighted wife.

"Tell ye 'beout it in the mornin'," he yawned. "Tell ye 'beout it all the rest of my life. Jest now I want to lay off and dream 'beout it. Never had such fun before sence I was born."

Squire Farnlee, we must explain, had halted at Lexington, and taken to his bed with a mustard poultice on his chest, a nearly exhausted and altogether voiceless old warrior.

CHAPTER XIII

A WORRIED MAJOR-GENERAL

THE moment Percy's column ceased its long battle, Captain Moorcastle galloped down to the Charlestown ferry, got himself over to Boston as promptly as possible, and hurried to Gage's headquarters.

His Excellency did not look like a great man as he listened to the rapid verbal report of his clever staff-officer; he looked like an emphatically common-sized man whose only great emotion was a vast perplexity bordering upon fright. He strode up and down the room in his big, shiny, creaking boots, taking the short steps and sudden turns of a man whose muscles mechanically obey the vacillations of a flurried spirit, and glancing occasionally at his hard-browed subordinate with an air of demanding mercy.

"Good Ged!" he broke out at last. "Nearly three hundred men lost! Oh no, Moorcastle! not so bad as that! Why, good Ged! what does it mean? Could n't Smith keep those fellows off better than that? But the troops fought, of course; *they* behaved themselves, I hope."

"Why, yes; of course. But you know how things go, General, in a—in a—retreat; after all, it was a kind of retreat. And a retreat under fire—you know it's an awkward business."

"Yes, yes, I know—doosid strain on discipline," groaned the General, who really did know, for he had been in Braddock's defeat.

"And naturally there was at times a little confusion," pursued Moorcastle. "I am sorry to inform your Excellency that we must have lost twenty or thirty prisoners."

"Prisoners?—the devil!" roared the General. "You don't think so, Captain. There 'll be a doose of a hullabaloo about that in England. Those fellows in Parliament—Chatham and Barré and their gang—will make a doose of an uproar. I would n't care so much about *them*—a pack of loud-mouthed malignants!—hopelessly out of power. But what will headquarters say? British troops surrendering to a flock of rebel rustics! Why, good Ged! good Ged! good Ged! They ought to have used their bayonets, demmit!"

"So they did, General—when they had a chance. But a rifle-ball is sometimes longer than a bayonet. Oh, there 's nothing to be said against the men; they fought as well as they could—under the circumstances."

"The circumstances?" demanded Gage, facing about upon him. "Who *was* in fault, then?"

He was in such a rage and worry that the cool-headed, cynical aid-de-camp could hardly forbear smiling in his face.

"The ambuscades, General," he replied; "the marksmanship; the—the Yankees, in short. Those fellows went at us a great deal more stoutly than we could have expected. Why, they fought us muzzle to muzzle, over there at Cambridge. And it was a long march to make under fire. It could n't help being a tough day's work."

The bothered General began to justify himself for his expedition, as though his aid-de-camp were the War Office, or a commission of Parliament. In reality, he was talking to his own military conscience, rather than to Moorcastle.

"*I am not to blame for all this,*" he half complained and half scolded. "*I didn't want any fighting.* Who'd have thought that an old fellow like Pitcairn—a man with eleven children and one at the breast, like John Rogers—who'd have thought he'd be so dem'd injudicious and violent—so wanting in patience and conduct? Why, he could have sent those poor peasants home with a few soft words. He ought to have made a nice little speech; summoned the nearest justice; had the Riot Act read; all that sort of rubbish. And here he gallops up to them bellowing, '*Rebels, disperse!*' Of course a man rolls up his sleeves when you challenge him to. And of course, too, the soldiers thought they had business on hand."

"*'Rebels, disperse!'*" repeated the General in disgust. "*Why, he might as well have ordered, 'Fire!'* at once; yes indeed! Of course I can't let Pitcairn be trounced for this; he's a noble old fellow, and an excellent officer, demmit; but I do wish he had shown more common sense. And now, as to the column being too feeble for the business, I could n't order out the whole garrison of Boston, begad. Here those fellows in London want me to seize the stores—sniff at me because I don't seize the stores—and furnish me nothing to do it with. Skeleton regiments!—not a battalion on the station that musters four hundred men for duty! and yet I must send expeditions through howling wildernesses of Yankee marksmen

after barrels of wooden spoons! So here we are, as a consequence, in a state of war—open war! And everybody will denounce *me* as the author of it. What did they send me here for? *I* did n't want to take charge of these dem'd, obstinate, pragmatical, hair-splitting, lawing, rebellious, Down-East Yankees, demmem! What does a good officer know about politics? I wish there was no law in the British dominions and possessions but the Mutiny Act. Then an honest, well-meaning soldier could see his way clear."

The General was really miserable under his load of complex responsibilities. He could not help unbosoming himself to his favorite staff-officer, and soliciting, so to speak, his sympathy and pity. He had been a despot in Boston, but not by disposition nor understandingly. He had tyrannized simply because he was a trained old soldier, and felt bound to carry out orders from the home government, no matter how unwise they might be. The thing that he dreaded most on earth, the one thing that he regarded with sentiments of abject terror, was the censure of his military superiors and especially of the War Office. And now, would the affair of Concord bring him censure? or would it bring him approbation and promotion? He thought more of that question than of the dead and wounded, whether American or British.

" Well, Captain," he continued, resuming the tone of a commander-in-chief, " all this must be written out and sent home. Tell the post-adjutant I want him."

" Any orders with regard to movements? " the aid ventured to enquire.

" No!! " bawled the General, relaxing into his extra-

official excitement. "Not a man shall put his nose outside the lines till I have more troops. That 's the first thing I mean to write to headquarters. I want re-enforcements, begad!"

And he hammered on his writing-table with such force as to startle the leaden inkstand into kicking off its accoutrement of quill pens.

It was very late that night before Moorcastle got to bed. The General was as restless as a fever patient, and sent for him a dozen times to ask questions, and to repeat them. Were Percy's men bivouacked in order of battle, and pickets out? Was there any straggling about Charlestown? Of course Percy was a splendid officer and meant to keep the men straight; but then Percy was so cursedly good-natured and soft-hearted! By Jupiter, every man should be catted in the morning who did n't go to bed that night and rest himself. Were the wounded all brought over? Did anybody really *know* that the wounded were over? Did anybody under God's heaven *know* it? Was there a guard-reserve on Charlestown Neck? Had the guard been doubled on Boston Neck? Where in the name of everything holy was that chief engineer? Where the Old Harry was that communication from the admiral? And so on till long past midnight.

The General, like many another worried commander, was very hard on his staff-officers, especially those whom he most trusted. Even after Moorcastle had gone to bed, he was awakened and summoned back to headquarters, rubbing his eyes to keep them open. But by the time he appeared, his chief had forgotten what he wanted, and stared at him in surprise, with a peppering of indignation at being disturbed by a question.

"Oh, demmit, yes," he said at last, in a feeble, high-pitched voice, as though he were about to cry. "But, demmit, you 've been so long coming, I believe somebody else has attended to it. Go along to bed. If I want you, I 'll send for you."

"I don't doubt it," thought Moorcastle, and stumbled back to his dormitory, to be banged up at six the next morning and hurried off to look for the admiral or some other mislaid article of warfare. One can perceive that his time and his energies were pretty smartly occupied. And meanwhile Huldah Oakbridge was marvelling that he did not come to see her, and shedding tears of wounded love, or of wounded vanity, over his neglectfulness.

During all that day after the battle he hardly called her to mind. When he was not attending to official business, he was chatting about the fighting with officers who had been in it, or rehearsing it to officers who had been out of it. It must be stated, if only to depict his character, that he did not flatter these gentlemen's prejudices or conceit. With all his arrogance, and partly no doubt because of his arrogance, he was a hard-headed, clear-eyed creature, who dared to see a thing for himself and to describe it as he saw it. Moreover, he rather liked to contradict people, especially self-satisfied people.

"I have changed my opinion of those beggars," he said in his harsh, ringing voice to a puffy old colonel, the chief quartermaster of the garrison. "If they had any drill or discipline, they would be good soldiers; and as it is, they are very formidable as light troops in a wooded country. They outshoot our fellows all hollow, and that 's a devil of an advantage."

"But have they any pluck?" swelled and snorted the quartermaster, who had never seen a fight except from the baggage train. "Have they anything similar to British pluck? Could they stand up to the bayonet? Of course, as you say, they are not drilled. But demme, sir, you may drill a Frenchy till he 's green, and he can't stand up to the bayonet. No pluck at the bottom, Captain; no British pluck. And I fancy it 's just the same with these—aw—these dem'd cod-fishing, pumkin-eating Yankees."

"Sweet delusion, Colonel," grinned Moorcastle, with the sub-acid contempt of fighting officers for habitual quartermasters. "They hunted us and peppered us till we were every one of us doosid glad to have them leave it off. I fear they are going to make us a great deal of trouble before we get through with them."

"You don't really mean it, Captain!" stared the colonel, and strutted away to look for a more agreeable story-teller.

It was late evening now, and Moorcastle went to his lodgings. There he read for a while in the well-thumbed volumes of his military library, for he was an unusually zealous man in his profession, and wanted to become an eminent commander. Presently he fell to thinking over the fighting of the day before, and querying whether it could have been managed any better than Percy had managed it. But before he had decided this tactical problem, his memory turned to that curious scene of temporary captivity in the barn-yard alley.

"It was a blazing silly rush of mine," he reflected. "And it came near costing me something—either life,

or liberty, or a horse. Why the what 's-his-name did n't that fellow shoot me? He wanted to. I could see it in his face; he perfectly hated me. And what did he order me to dismount for? That saved my life. Did he see that the other beggar was aiming at me? I 'll be hanged if I can make anything out of it but this, that he had n't time to run me off as a prisoner, and could n't muster the nerve to murder me. I owe him a good turn; and I 'd like to settle it —of course!"

The Captain stuck out his lips with a pensive and slightly discontented expression. It was rather humiliating, by Jove and the rest of them, to be under such obligations to a provincial and a rebel. He scowled as he thought of it; he would have been pleased to pay the debt at once—pay it in guineas, demmit, and get rid of it.

Then in a random way, and mainly because he was a very masculine male, he called to mind that other provincial, that little yellow-headed thing, that Huldah. What a darling, fresh little posy she was, and how sweetly she had let him steal that kiss! He must go and see her (a yawn), and kiss her again (another yawn), and the rest of it.

But of a sudden an idea came into his head which made him open his eyes wide and send forth a thoughtful whistle. Was there, perhaps, something serious—something in the wedding-ring line—between that gal and the Lexington fellow? She had made believe *not*; but then women will lie so!—especially when they 're after a man!

And could the affair be made up, now that she had been kissed by an Englishman, and the American had

seen it? Oh, *that* would n't hinder; these colonists were probably not very sensitive in their love-makings; and if he, Moorcastle, should drop the gal for good, her rustic would canter back to her. Well, he would be honorable, dem'd honorable and dev'lish considerate, about it. He would n't tumble the gal again until he knew for sure that there was nothing serious between her and the Lexington fellow.

To the Yankee damsel herself—to the question whether he should make *her* happy or miserable—this Englishman of a hundred years ago, this sinister descendant of royalty, gave not a serious thought. He could be anxious as to his own honor and self-respect, but not as to the honor and self-respect of a Boston merchant's daughter. We Americans were provincials; we were a low-caste rabble in the eyes of the brahmins of the mother country; we were welcome to lick their boots, but we must look out for our own noses. "Even the street-sweepers of London," said Chatham, "talk about *our subjects in America*." Is it any wonder that the legal revolt of Farnlee senior was taken up and pushed to the bitter end by the social revolt of Farnlee junior?

Several days passed before Moorcastle thought again of Huldah. Extraordinary tidings disquieted headquarters, and General Gage kept his retinue breathlessly busy.

Hard-riding Tories, spattered with April mud, or perhaps arrayed in tar and feathers—loud-shrieking birds of evil omen—flapped in from all quarters with reiterated announcement that the march to Concord had stirred up Antichrist, and that not only Massachusetts but all New England was in rebellion. Ten

thousand, fifteen thousand, nobody knew how many thousand, armed Yankees were trooping in squads, in companies, in battalions, toward Boston.

Ere long a camp stretched from Mystic River to Roxbury, exhibiting by day a vast semicircle of huts and tents, and by night bonfires as numerous as the stars. On a dozen hills there was a hasty throwing up of rude breastworks and a planting of venerable iron cannon or of wooden quakers. General Ward was in command, supported by Generals Pomeroy and Putnam, all three veterans of the Seven Years War.

As a loyal Briton Gage was horrified, and as a judicious old soldier he was scared. Since the Concord affair he had completely and forever left off despising Yankeeedom as a military quantity. Far from attacking the rebel lines, he scarcely hoped to hold Boston. The peninsula of Charlestown, within grape-shot range of his own lodgings, was abandoned; and not a soldier was allowed to step outside the Barrier, except on picket-duty, or to work at throwing up exterior defences.

To make the Yankees believe that re-enforcements were arriving, transports were towed out to sea after bedtime, and sailed in next morning after breakfast. Every few days, by every packet that went to London or Halifax, his Excellency wrote for more troops. His staff got jaded to the bone with scratching paper, peering through spy-glasses, visiting posts, inspecting islands, rowing after the admiral, and making reports. There never was a more pitiable case of a small hero in a monstrous funk. If he had not been as afraid as death of the War Office, he would have hustled his army aboard ship and left Boston to the rebels.

"By Jupiter!" he would grumble, "I don't want to lose all these troops; I don't want to lose my reputation as a soldier. The place is n't tenable,—with this garrison. If the Yankees only knew their own strength, they 'd pitch us out of it in twenty-four hours. And then those fellows in London would make a scapegoat of *me*. That 's the way in the army. Never half men enough; do the impossible; use the British bayonet; whip all creation, or off goes your head!"

But Moorcastle, a hard-hearted, able youngster, his nerves as yet unshaken by the responsibilities of command, could not fully appreciate and compassionate the troubles of his chief.

"That 's a pretty state of mind for a veteran officer!" he thought—"a pretty state of mind for a born gentleman, the son of a viscount! I wish to heaven the War Office would send us the re-enforcement of a general. If we were only on good terms with Sparta, and could borrow Xantippus, or Gylippus, or Brasidas!"

CHAPTER XIV

ROUGH GOING FOR TRUE LOVE

DESOLATE Boston, with war thus gathering around it, became more desolate than ever.

The daily business ceased to earn the mere bare, stinted necessities of life. So numerous were the beggars that they sacked many abandoned buildings, and, but for armed guards, would have sacked the town. Hundreds of families obtained passes, shut up their houses and shops, and streamed away to the surrounding villages. The population, sixteen thousand a year since, descended to five or six thousand, mainly verging toward pauperism.

The father and mother of Ash Farnlee's false love had serious thoughts of flying from their beleaguered Jerusalem. Mrs. Oakbridge wanted to go because she was at heart a rebel, or in Whiggish language, a patriot. Her husband, though born a moderate, and averse as a *pater familias* to whatever politics injured business, did at least desire to find a spot where he might earn a subsistence.

"Yes, Dorothy, we might as well quit," he conceded. "This Concord fight has killed trade stone dead. I guess you're right; we'd better quit."

But here a dissentient bellow shattered through the dialogue. The door into the rear hall was open, and

so was the opposite door into the ground-floor bedroom. In that bedroom lay Uncle Fenn, a sick man ever since the Concord affair, and more snappish than even a sick man has a right to be, unless he is rich.

The outbreak of the Revolution had nearly killed the worthy, sensitive, petulant, sexagenarian loyalist. The anointed of the Lord openly defied!—our Gracious Majesty's lobsters hunted and slugged for twenty miles on end by traitors!—three hundred Englishmen, the objects of one's adoration, killed or captured by mere provincials!—the devout old Tory took it a great deal harder than General Gage himself. He came home from hearing the dreadful particulars with ashes on his head and gout in his stomach. He could not be got upstairs, and was tucked hastily away in his brother's bedroom, where he had lain ever since, praying, and whimpering, and snapping.

"I won't go, Jehiel," he now shouted. "Never! never! so help me Heaven! Never will I join myself unto the tabernacle of those sons of treason."

"Timothy," said Oakbridge, in his conciliatory mercantile voice, "you'd be a deal safer and quieter out in the country."

"I should n't," wailed Timothy. "There is no safety in the tents of Dathan and Abiram. The Lord's vengeance will descend upon them and upon all who seek unto them. And I would n't be quiet. I would denounce them every day; yea, every hour would I cry out against them; so help me Heaven!"

"I guess he would," Oakbridge grumbled indignantly; but his wife put her thin hand over his mouth.

"So help me Heaven! so help me Heaven!" Uncle Fenn continued to bawl, in his hysterical excitement.

"What *shall* we do with him!" whispered Mrs. Oakbridge in meek despair. "He won't go; and how can we stay?"

Her husband leaned back in his chair in order to get an easier shot into the bedroom. "But, Timothy, I am just running to poverty here," he argued. "If I was out in the country—say at Northampton, with our eldest—I could start a new business and get bread."

"Oh, leave me—leave me!" scoffed and whimpered Uncle Fenn. "Throw me into the gutter; send me to the hospital. I'd rather die with those poor soldiers—the suffering servants of my rightful king—than live in palaces of rebellion."

"Never mind answering him, Jehiel," whispered the wife. "We might leave him with John. Ann is bewitched upon staying here, and I suppose John will give in to her, as usual. Ann has the same opinions with brother, and would be sure to take nice care of him. You, and I, and Huldah could go."

"Yes, and we *will* go," mumbled Oakbridge. "Once I'm at Northampton with our Ezra, I can set to work again, and live along."

Uncle Fenn, raised on one shaking elbow, was hearkening with both ears, but could hear nothing. "I don't know what you are muttering," he whimpered. "But I know it's not right; I know it's rebellion and treason; I know it just as well as if I heard it."

Then he broke out in a wonderful, woeful medley of prayers, comminations, and complaints, addressed alternately to Heaven, to Brother Jehiel, and to himself. If he could but depart and be with his God, beyond reach of the children of unlawfulness and violence! Oh that the Mighty One would rend the skies, and

come down to the help of the dear old mother country! Men would yet see it; they would see the king crowned with wisdom and his sceptre wreathed with power; they would see the counsels of the wicked brought to naught. "Spare not Absalom, nor yet cursing Shimei!" gasped the suffering, half-crazed invalid. "Visit them with defeat and castigation, though it break our hearts with mourning."

Mrs. Oakbridge, her head bowed and her hands clasped, listened in a kind of horror to the ravings of this pitiable old torment of a saint.

"We won't fling back at him," muttered Oakbridge, as though there were any danger of his wife's doing it. "When a minister goes mad, he's madder than any other kind of human, or four-legged creetur either. But I don't really see, Dorothy, how we can leave him."

There was a long silence. Mrs. Oakbridge had plenty of time to pray within herself for help and direction. At last, with a plaintive smile which begged for a word in favor of departure, she turned to her daughter and murmured, "Huldah, what do *you* say?"

The girl had been present through the whole scene, knitting in silence, twitching her yarn off the ball from time to time, and biting her under lip moodily. Now she pinched her lips together, drew a deep breath as if about to speak, and yet said not a word. Pretty as kind nature had made her, she was not at this moment an agreeable spectacle. There was a half-piteous, half-sulky droop at the corners of her rosy mouth, and she was evidently on the tremulous verge of a fit of angry crying.

It must be understood that Moorcastle had not been to the house since the brief and formal call of digestion which had followed the dinner. She knew, of course, that he had been busy; she knew that his life had been in peril on the battle-field; but, all the same, he ought to have come again to see her; he ought to have come every day; for she wanted him to. What a reception she had got up for him in the cloud-castles of her imagination! She had pictured herself as falling into his arms, weeping happy tears over his dangers and his safe return, and winning his noble heart and hand with her tenderness.

And then, with all that to draw him—for it seemed to her that he must know it—he had not come. Other officers—two or three, at any rate—had got engaged just before they went off to the fight, or on the very day after it. But this man, the man whom she had so favored, had not been near her, one of the prettiest girls in Boston. She was angry enough to want to punish him by turning patriot again; but—but—how could she quit Boston and so lose sight of him forever?

“I d’ know what to think,” she answered her mother in a gasping whisper, jerking at her knitting so petulantly as to snap the yarn. Perhaps the broken thread seemed to her an evil omen, or perhaps the trivial mishap was just sufficient to brim over her cup of grief, for a sudden quivering distorted her lips, and, violently pushing back her low chair, she ran upstairs and slammed her bedroom door upon herself.

Ah, this love-making! It may be fun—a very breathless fun—when it is lucky. But sometimes it is too much like the fun that a wild animal has in being hunted and wounded.

"Huldy seems all upset these days," murmured Mrs. Oakbridge, with the patient non-committalism of a mother who suspects that her daughter's outbursts of emotion relate to a trouble of the heart.

"She did n't treat Ash right," said Oakbridge. "I dessay she 's repenting of it."

This manlike simplicity was too simple for Mrs. Oakbridge to put up with in silence. "Then why don't she go into the country where he is?" she demanded. "I 'm afraid it ain't Ash Farnlee——"

But here she was interrupted. Uncle Fenn, hearkening with the acute senses of invalidism, caught the name of Farnlee. "He 's a traitor," he shouted. "Mistress Yerksum told me about him yesterday. He was seen leading the rebels at Metonomy. He 's a bloody-handed traitor."

During the delivery of this speech, the wife of John Oakbridge bustled into the kitchen. Sister Ann was the same wholesome and not unhandsome specimen of womanhood that we have seen her heretofore. A week of civil war, a week of burning indignation against those ambushing provincials, had not consumed an ounce of her British solidity and might, nor faded the full-blown roses of her cheeks.

"Who 's a traitor, Mother Oakbridge?" she asked in her healthy, ringing voice.

"Ash Farnlee," bellowed Uncle Fenn. "Everybody here is. Treason is in the air. Jehiel wants to join the rebels—wants to get inside their lines—wants to flee from his king, as Jonah fled from the Lord."

Sister Ann, despite her ballast of brawn, was so shaken by this news that she lost her grip on her aspirates. "W'ere 's 'Uldah?" she enquired eagerly.

"Huldy is dreadfully upset these days," sighed Mrs. Oakbridge, gesturing with her head toward the hall and stairway.

Sister Ann hastened aloft and pounded on the girl's door.

"Who is it?" called a peevish voice from within.

"It's me—Ann. Lemme in. I've got a thing or two to tell you."

The door swung back a little, and there was a truly pitiable face, the bright blue eyes reddened and the cheeks swollen with crying.

Ann bumped in, closed the door with hasty stealth, and locked it. "Of course you're mad," she said. "So they're going to leave Boston? What nonsense an' trumpery!"

"I don't care," snapped the desperate Huldah.

"Why then you never 'll see *him* again—never! That's just what 'll 'appen. Now!"

"I don't care," repeated Huldah, recommencing to sob, and fanning her wet face with her handkerchief.

"You ain't ever gone back to Farnlee?" gasped Ann. "You ain't a-hankering after *him*?"

"No I ain't," Huldah declared. "I don't care for anybody nor anything," she added, breaking down anew into a fit of tremulous sobbing. It was a child-like, inarticulate appeal for sympathy, and for some word of encouragement, if such a word were discoverable in this hapless universe.

Sister Ann's womanly heart responded to the love-lorn demand for consolation. "Oh—look a' here—say, now," she urged, patting the girl's flossy curls. "Oh, what lovely angel hair! He did use to look at it so! jus' kep' his eyes glued to it. Say, now—you must n't

be chaffed with Captain Moorksle; he 's awful put about in these days, don't you know? That 's where it is. Of course he ain't much time to call."

" I should think he had n't—a whole week! And when he came, after the dinner——"

" Oh, don't you mind that. That was just a call of ceremony; of course he was formal, and a bit short."

" He looked as if he was mad to think that Ash Farnlee saw him when——" Huldah could not finish the sentence, and blushed through the streaky redness of her crying fit.

" Yes, I know," nodded Ann, comprehending that the kiss was alluded to. " But I don't believe he cared a rush. And as for his not being devoted! Well, if you 'd only but gone with him to the door, as I reck-mended you to——"

" I never did run after a man yet," said Huldah, trying to bridle proudly, but with small success.

" Oh, igsackly—after provincials," returned the high-born daughter of Highgate. " But British officers are different; one can't be so uppish with them; that 's where it is. Say, now; let me tell you; we must look after him a bit. I 've just lately found out where you can be sure to come afoul of him without seeming igsackly to mean it."

" Wh-a-t?" droned Huldah, looking up with a piteous hope, her tearful face all unhidden.

" He goes every day, about one of the clock, to lunch at the Swan. Now we can be nearabouts there between one and two, don't you see? And meet him as it were by accident, don't you see? And then it 'll all depend upon his manner, don't you see? That 's where it is. His manner will let you know what to

depend upon; and of course you want to know, before you decide upon leaving here. It's just only fair to him, and likewise to yourself."

"We-ll," Huldah meekly assented. A week of neglect from a redcoat had taken all the conceit and pride out of the half-spoiled little colonial belle. She was as ready to humble and demean herself in order to catch him as is a modern American belle to change her religion for the coronet of a French count or an Italian marquis.

CHAPTER XV

AN EXPLANATION

HULDAH chanced to be alone when she met her Captain. What a moment of throbbing fright was that in which she saw him coming towards her along a narrow street where they could not possibly evade each other! Ash Farnlee had felt no such throttling emotion when he saw the English muskets levelled upon him at Lexington.

The fact is that, what with Sister Ann's intoxicating chatter, and the dazzle of Moorcastle's uniform and grandeeism, and the circumstance that he had been pointedly attentive and then neglectful, the girl was bewitched about him. Ash Farnlee had been so thoroughly exorcised from her heart that she never recollect ed him except to be displeased by the recollection. From morning till night she hardly thought of any human creature but this gorgeous Englishman who had seemed to promise her every wish of her heart with that lightly given kiss.

And now he was coming toward her, upborne on the glory of his shining boots, like a god travelling on a cloud. Would he bow coldly, and pass by on the other side? Or would he halt and take her hand and grant her a smile? She hardly felt her feet under her, and her eyes had a tremulous wandering glitter, and her cheek grew paler with every forward step.

Moorcastle behaved with the automatic courtesy of a man thoroughly broken to society. He lifted his hat high above his powdered head, and made her a gracious bow of the elaborate sort then in fashion, and smiled with all the sweetness that his wolfish front teeth would permit. But then suddenly calling to mind that fellow at Lexington, he avoided taking her hand. All the same, he stood with body bent, and gold-laced hat held aloft between thumb and finger, as he opened the dialogue; all the same, too, he had done enough to fill the girl's cheeks with color, and to make her eyes coruscate with sparkles of happiness. One is so glad of a little kindness when one has longed for much, and been fearful of winning none!

"Ah, Miss Oakbridge! so rejoiced to meet you! really, now. I have wanted to excuse myself for being such a stranger. Been desperately occupied with professional business, you must do me the favor to believe."

"Oh! yes indeed!" Huldah gasped with a wild beating of the heart which revealed itself in the twitching of her lips and the shaking of her voice. "I am *so* glad you escaped from that dreadful battle!"

"Oh, come now! 'pon honor, you ought n't to flatter that way," he laughed in a mincing style which we should now call affected. "Of course I 'm greatly obliged for your kind interest; only, with regard to the fight, it was n't a battle at all; it was what we call a skirmish."

"Oh! but you *must* have been in *great* danger!" insisted Huldah. "I *know* you must have been in such *dreadful* danger!"

"Well—aw—there was a moment—a rather disagree-

able moment," he said with sudden seriousness, recalling to mind his adventure with Farnlee. He settled his wide-open, trooperish stare on her for a moment, wondering if he could bring it about to ask her if she were betrothed to that fellow. But he did not see his way clear to the question.

"I *was* in one rather ugly hole," he resumed. "But I got out of it. I may have the pleasure of telling you about it some time."

Then he meant to call on her again! The idea made Huldah gasp with joy. A fortnight previous—before she had gone bewitched about this dazzling Englander—she would have been angry with herself for catching her breath so like a pleased baby.

The Captain noted the gasp, and softened toward her a little more than he had purposed. There was an expression of yearning on her upturned, tremulous lips, which he could not quite harden himself against. He thought of a kitten on the outside of a window, opening its coral mouth in mute application to be let in. To refuse to let in this panting girl was indeed very difficult.

"Ah, I say, which way are you going?" he stammered. "I might step along with you."

"I was going home," returned Huldah, and then blushed intensely over the unmeant fib, for she had merely been walking to and fro to meet him.

"Do me the pleasure to allow me," smirked the Captain, and turned with her toward the Oakbridge dwelling. "By the way," he continued, looking down at her with a resolution to make the dialogue formal and far removed from love-making, "I—by Jove! what was I going to say? Oh, I owe you another apology."

Huldah guessed that he was going to apologize for the kiss; and it seemed to her that, if he did, she should die on the spot. How could she endure a regret over it, or how say that she forgave him for it, when it was one of her sweetest recollections?

"I spoke rather scornfully," he began in a lazy tone, for he really cared little about the matter—"aw—it was at your father's table, you may remember—not exactly the place for it—I spoke rather sneeringly of the fighting qualities of your—of the Americans, in short. Well, the truth compels me—not only to regret hectoring in that style under a provincial's roof—but to, in fact, take back some of my predictions. We didn't find it so easy to march through the colonies. Those fellows out there went at us in a style which did them credit."

"I don't care anything about them," burst out the little love-lorn sycophant. "I don't want anybody to apologize to me for saying anything against them. I think they behave—outrageously."

"Oh, indeed?" he laughed, rather pleased with her loyalty, for of course he must want people to be loyal. "Yes, exactly! They are altogether in the wrong; one may say downright criminal. Only, as to their fighting faculty—which is what I was talking of—they have a doosid deal more of it than I gave them credit for," he deliberately added and affirmed, speaking out his full opinion to please himself, whether it pleased her or not.

Huldah, so happy a moment ago, began to flutter and tremble again. She had meant to be very agreeable to him; and, to her confusion, she seemed to have failed. She could only giggle a little, like a child who

desires to placate an elder person, and who cannot think of words whereby to do it. How much like a child she seemed in the presence of this lordly Briton, when she was so coquettishly at ease with young gentlemen of native birth!

The Captain was such an experienced fox (or wolf) among women that he could not help perceiving that he had before him a willing victim. He was a little amused to see her so fascinated, and at the same time he was a little touched and softened, for emotion is infectious and vanity has its gratitude. If he had had a bottle of her father's madeira in his head, and if they two had been shut up by themselves somewhere, he might have repeated his kiss.

The least he could do was to make it a nice, prattling, entertaining walk for her. He told her somewhat of his work during the last few days: how he had been banged up early of mornings and dismissed to bed late of nights; how he had scribbled countless official documents when he was not rowing after a wandering admiral or galloping after a mislaid fort; how he had lost his temper with toil and sleeplessness, and bullied soldiers and kicked a coachman and scolded his washerwoman; and he flung in a funny anecdote or two concerning a fussy general whom he was prudent enough not to name.

He meant to amuse Huldah, and he succeeded triumphantly. She laughed, and shrieked, and writhed like a child who is tickled in the ribs. He could have made her cry just as easily, if he had been so minded. Whatever emotion he should have demanded of her, she was palpitatingly ready to concede it to him. Yet how pretty, and sweet, and fascinating she was in her

infatuation! Little could he guess, experienced woman-hunter though he was, how ugly her grief-smitten face had been, and how spitefully her soprano voice had twanged, when she was complaining to Sister Ann of his neglect.

At last, as they were nearing the Oakbridge gate, he remembered that he had a question to ask. If there was nothing between this girl and the man who had saved his life, he would go in and make a call, no matter what happened—to *her*. If there *was* something between them, he would stay outside now and forever, honor of a British officer, *par Dieu*!

"Oh—by the way—I forgot to tell you," he said, halting at the gate and looking her square in the eyes. "I had a monstrous queer adventure the other day in that little skirmish."

"Oh yes; do tell me!" begged Huldah. "But won't you come in, Captain Moorcastle?"

He took no notice of the invitation. "I met an acquaintance there," he continued. "He was on the other side, I am sorry to say. It was your young gentleman from Lexington."

Huldah began to redden and to open her eyes in a scared way.

"Ah—I see—you are interested," he laughed, not quite pleased with the suspicion. "Don't be worried. Nothing happened to him that I know of. And I believe he fought well—better than he had a right to—on that side."

"I don't know what you mean, sir," stammered Huldah, changing from red to pale and back again.

"Precisely; it's not my business, of course; excuse my intruding on a delicate subject."

The Captain himself stammered somewhat, and for two or three good reasons. In the first place, he had guessed that the girl was betrothed, and it worried him somewhat—oh, nothing to speak of; it would pass away. In the second place, if she were not betrothed, he was entangling himself with her by questioning her about it.

"If you mean that I am promised to him, or ever was promised to him, Captain Moorcastle, it is an entire mistake, I do assure you," said Huldah all in one breath, and then stopped to pant.

"Oh—indeed!" he replied, both relieved and embarrassed.

"Yes, indeed, it's true, Captain Moorcastle," insisted poor Huldah, her under lip quivering piteously, despite her struggles for self-possession.

Her fright and humility cheapened her dreadfully in his eyes. He had felt for a moment that he was caught; and now, of a sudden, he felt that he was free.

"Ah well, I got the idea somehow," he resumed. "He was at the birthday dinner, I noticed, and seemed rather particularly interested, I thought. It occurred to me that you might care to know that I saw him."

"He was just an old acquaintance," pleaded and fibbed Huldah, miserably conscious that she had lost ground, but not knowing what better to do than to go on pleading. "I take no manner of interest in him. He has chosen his party, and I have chosen mine."

The scene had become wearisome to Moorcastle, and the girl herself slightly irksome. He decided that he would see her again when he wanted to see her more.

" Ah well, if you don't like him, sorry I mentioned him," he mumbled, opening the gate for her to enter. " And now do pity me for being obligeed to tear myself away," he added, with one of the flourishing bows of the period.

" But you will call soon ? " she begged, offering her hand, which he took with his left.

The long front teeth (she thought them beautiful) showed between his lips as he answered, " Surely ! with the greatest possible pleasure." Looking up at him as she did (the pleading kitten with the coral mouth), she was too pretty to be denied so little as a kindly parting speech.

Yes, and before he had got fifty yards off, he nearly came to a halt and an about-face, wishing that he had accepted her meek invitation. A girl had no right to fling herself at a fellow's head in such style, unless she was ready and willing to—to make things pleasant for him.

" As to that Lexington chap," he at last remembered to think, " I don't understand his behavior at all, curse me if I do. And if the girl don't want him, I can't hand her over to him. I shall have to get even with him some other way."

CHAPTER XVI

AIMING AT THE PEERAGE

O F course Huldah rehearsed the entire scene with Moorcastle to her habitual confidant, guided and stimulated through the narrative by Ann's queries of "What did *he* say to that?" and "What did *you* say then?"

The yearnings of love and the exaggerations of vanity so swelled the volume of the tale, and gave it such unmeant variations, that Moorcastle would hardly have recognized the interview in the form which it took on those voluble and fervid lips. And yet Huldah wanted to tell Ann precisely how things had happened, for she wanted to know exactly where she stood and what was likely to befall her next.

It is not easy to fully comprehend and state the workings of a fragile little soul which is striving to turn to its own purposes a soul far stronger and more egoistic than itself. As well might one try to describe all the fluctuations of a moth about the flame of a candle, or all the spiritual struggles of a feeble saint who seeks to drive a favorable bargain with Satan. But as there is a multitude of butterfly beings like Huldah, and as they may possibly be of an immortal nature, is it not one's duty to grant some earnest study to their gyrations?

"I do *wish* you could have seen him bow to me," twittered Huldah. "I never *was* so bowed to before in my whole life. He seemed perfectly delighted to meet again. Don't you think he was?"

"Why, sutnly, if he showed it so much," hoped Ann, who did not know how mechanically society people bow and smile. For her part, she was pleasant to those she liked, and unpleasant to those she disliked, after the manner of Highgate.

"I think he wanted, and wanted, and wanted to come in," continued Huldah. "And oh! he did excuse himself so beautifully! 'Do pity me for being obleeged to tear meself away,'" she recited, imitating to the best of her soprano ability Moorcastle's robust voice and rolling utterance. "And he looked so handsome when he said it! Don't you think he has a beautiful complexion?"

Sister Ann remembered the embryonic pimples under the Captain's roseate surface, but she also admired the fashionable port-wine coloring of the period, and she responded, "Puffeckly splendid!—so English!"

"Oh! he *must* be serious," resumed Huldah. "You can't imagine how glum he looked when he was trying to find out if I was promised to Ash Farnlee—horrid idea! It seemed to me as though those great black eyes were boring into my very soul. Why, I thought I should never be able to speak; I thought I should drop. I felt like saying, 'Do catch me, Captain Moorcastle! Mercy! what a scene it would have been if I *had* fainted!'"

"The best thing you could 'a' done," judged Ann. "But you convinced him, did n't you? You made him understand puffeckly that Farnlee was nothink to you?"

"Oh, perfectly! I just *scorned* the idea. Why! don't you think he believed me?"

"I do 'ope so. A British officer would n't stand 'aving that kind of a rival."

"But what makes you think he did n't believe me?"

"I did n't say so; I said I 'oped he did. There! don't worry."

"He would n't be mad, just merely because I used to know Ash. He was n't mad when Ash was here to the dinner. You know he—he kissed me."

"Yes, I know," mumbled Ann, who had got rather weary of hearing about that salutation. She, a born Englishwoman, had never been kissed by an officer, and here was this little Yankee thing—! It was more than her Britannic spunk could well bear, and she could not help wanting to take down Bostonian conceit. "You must n't make too much of that," she said. "Gen'lemen, when they 've been drinking a bit, sometimes make free without meaning true love, much less merridge."

"Well!—now!" pouted Huldah, looking at her with plaintive reproach.

But Sister Ann had recovered her good temper. She really did desire most passionately that her pretty little relative should marry Moorcastle. It would be such a splendid thing, almost too glorious for a native of Highgate, to be the sister-in-law of a captain who might become an earl!

"There! don't worry," she repeated. "I do 'ope and believe it meant never so much. But I don't want you to be too easy sure. That's where it is. One can't be solid sure of a gen'leman till he 's spoke the word and nailed himself with a promise. And I think,

too, in such a case as yourn, my dear, it 's always well to 'ave it in black and white. If I was in your shoes, I should aim to get my hoffer on paper, and if it had his coat o' harms at the top, so much the better."

"Oh!" said the girl, more in protest than in acquiescence. She had been painting the "hoffer" to herself: the gorgeous, adorable Captain at her feet; his pleading voice and fervid words; the joy of seeing and hearing him; the great joy of giving!

"Well, anyway, you won't hear now to going into the rebel lines," continued Ann. "That would kill it all stone dead; farewell then to Captain Moorksle!"

"Of course I 'm not going. I won't stir a step. I 'll be torn to rags and tatters first. Why! you 'll let me stay with you, won't you?"

"Yes; but if Father and Mother Oakbridge go—well, you know, they can take you in spite of me. That 's where it is."

"Oh dear!" whimpered Huldah. "How can we stop it?"

Then there was a solemn compact to fight tooth and nail against the project of a flight from Boston. "I 'll cry my eyes out," resolved and affirmed Huldah. "I 'll say that they are breaking my heart. I 'll tell them all about Captain Moorcastle."

"Yes, but wait! see here! Wait till there 's something more pertickler to tell them. Don't confess a word yet about the Captain. You don't know yet how they 'd take it. They might be all the fiercer to go, if they knew he was making up to you. Just you be prudent, won't you, dear?"

"Y-es," moaned Huldah, comprehending that pru-

dence meant slyness and deception, and wincing a little thereat.

But it was not easy to defeat the plan for leaving Boston. Mother Oakbridge was placidly intent upon joining her household to the cause which was supported by three fourths of her countrymen, and which she believed to be righteous. Father Oakbridge, that amiable forerunner of the modern American husband, easily yielded to his wife's blandly strenuous inclinations, backed as they were by the necessity of looking up business. They had decided to leave Uncle Fenn with John Oakbridge; to leave the store and the few remaining customers with John, also; and to settle in far-off, peaceable Northampton.

Huldah's first timid remonstrances against the project received no attention. When she became outspoken and fervid, her mother said, "Child, listen to your father." When she broke forth in lamentations and weeping, the same calm, determined voice added, "Huldy, go to your room, and open your Bible, and read the commandments."

The commandments (she really went up and read them) did her no good. The poor love-sick little thing was at her silly wits' ends. In her desperation she appealed to Uncle Fenn, who was on his tottering bandaged legs again, chock-full of gout and Toryism. But in vain did the parson wail and denounce; in vain did he threaten to hobble forth and die in the gutter; in vain did he summon the wrath of Heaven and of Gracious Majesty. Brawny Sister Ann's intervention was equally useless, for after one interview with quiet Mother Oakbridge, she retreated to her own dwelling and declined to make another sally. The merchant

went on closing up his share of Boston's business, and his women folk went on with their baling and boxing for the removal.

It was a sad household, even for a beleaguered city. Huldah packed kitchen ware and corded bundles of bedding, with the tears dropping off her rosy cheeks and the bridge of her cunning nose.

" You want to kill me," she at last burst out with a shaking mouth, glancing sidelong at her silent mother.

" Well, what is it all about, Huldy ? " was the answer. " Who is putting you up to this behavior ? "

" Nobody," wailed the girl. " I don't want to go into the country. I want to stay in Boston, where we've always lived. I don't want to go into the rebel lines."

The unwhipped daughters of modern Massachusetts can hardly imagine the terror with which Huldah uttered the defiance expressed in that word *rebel*. It was not so very many months since she had received a smart correction for a hasty bit of unfilial bravado; and even now, eighteen years old though she was, and cracked about a noble British officer, she did not feel quite safe from the paternal cow-skin.

" Is this all along of Ann's talk ? " enquired Mrs. Oakbridge.

" Uncle Fenn is as much against going as Sister Ann."

This was too transparent. Mrs. Oakbridge knew that Huldah did not care tuppence for Uncle Timotheus. Indeed, it was one of her griefs that her daughter, the petted darling of the household, had little family affection.

" Is it that—that Captain ? " she demanded, trying vainly to catch the girl's eye.

"I hain't seen him but once in two weeks," Huldah snapped with suspicious emotion.

Mrs. Oakbridge wondered if that were true, though she was ashamed to suspect her daughter (a sister in church membership) of even indirect fibbing. She bent her head over a roll of home-made carpet, and sewed up its tow-cloth casing without further speech. But she wore a clouded brow, that afternoon, when Captain Moorcastle called on the young lady of the house.

Huldah welcomed her visitor with such a smile as those who best loved her had not seen on her face for days. The Captain, moved by her obvious joy at meeting him, was more attentive and gallant than he had ever been before, except in that ecstatic moment of the kiss. There was a chance of an offer, or at least Huldah pantingly thought so, when her cumbersome sister-in-law bustled into the room, hitting both door-posts as usual.

"I'm so sorry to intrude," mumbled Ann, reddening under the discontented stare of the noble caller. "But if you will please to excuse it, Captain Moorksle, I'd beg leave to speak with you just a minute."

Then came the story of Jehiel Oakbridge's projected flight from Boston.

"And I don't want them to go," continued Ann. "Nor yet sister there don't want to go. But Father Oakbridge is main set on it, and we can't persuade him away from it. So we—me and sister there—we're just crying our heyes out."

"Oh, by Jupiter, yes! and I shall too," responded Moorcastle, with a jovial gallantry which made Huldah giggle and then turn pale. But in the next instant he

looked seriously concerned. "By Jupiter! this won't do at all," he continued. "We can't have our best citizens all rushing off to Mr. Israel Putnam and the other rebel patriarchs. Oh, I don't mean that your excellent parent (please give him my very best respects) actually means to join the insurgents, or even to wish them well. But it looks bad for us, don't you perceive, to have such intelligent persons leaving us, like rats deserting a sinking ship. When is this departure?"

"Day after to-morrow," murmured Huldah, with a piteous glance which implored help.

"The doose you say! Well, now, 'pon me soul, can't something be done? Suppose I should take the audacious liberty to say a word against it to your honored father?"

Huldah looked frightened, but Sister Ann cried out, "Oh! if you would be so kind!"

It had occurred to the eager match-maker that such an appeal, even though it should not please Father Oakbridge, would tend to "fix" Captain Moorcastle as Huldah's suitor.

But the same idea crossed the mind of the experienced lady-killer in scarlet. He bent his powdered head to ponder if there were not some other way, less entangling to his right honorable self, of keeping this family in Boston. Could not the worthy shopkeeper be furnished with a contract to supply the troops, or the fleet, or the refugees? His lips puffed out with an expression of disappointment as he called to mind that all plums of that sort had already been divided among influential citizens of pronounced and importunate loyalty. But just as Huldah began to lose courage

and fear she should cry, he looked up from sucking his gold-headed cane with a triumphant smile.

"Aw! I have it. I'll bet fifty guineas, Miss Oakbridge, that I sha'n't have the sorrow of losing sight of you in such a calamitous hurry."

But he would not explain his plan to the two overjoyed young women. "Not a word about this, I implore you on my knees," he said. "Now let me beg of you, both you kind-hearted angels, don't let a soul know that we have even talked this over."

Then he and Huldah looked at Sister Ann with an expression which enquired if she meant to stay all day. Being woman enough to understand the situation, she was preparing in blushing haste to depart, when that giant son of Kronos, the wooden clock in the hall, droned out the hour of five.

"By Jupiter!" cried the Captain, recollecting something of extreme importance to him, perhaps his dinner. And with a mumbled good-bye, and a most wonderful bow, he got himself out of the house, to the bitter disappointment of Huldah, who believed that she would have had an offer but for Sister Ann's intrusion.

The next day an order was issued from garrison headquarters, forbidding all citizens whatever from quitting the town, and revoking all passes theretofore granted. Imagine the delight of Huldah when she found that she was shut up in Boston with Captain Moorcastle. For to her there was nobody else there; he was her Boston, her earth, her universe.

CHAPTER XVII

NEW ENGLAND IN CAMP

AFTER the fight of Lexington and Concord, Squire Farnlee appeared no more as Death on the Pale Horse.

"I am an old man, Asahel," he explained. "The fatigue of that one day showed me that I am no longer fit to go forth to battle. You must join the army in my place, and do your duty there, and mine also. To every generation its own warfare, and for its own ends. I took up arms to maintain English rights for Englishmen born in America. But I begin to suspect that the purpose of this struggle will be independence. That (I must admit it, Asahel) is as yet a terrible idea to me. Yet God's will be done!"

Shortly after this interview Asahel became a captain, serving as aid on the staff of Major-General Artemas Ward, commander of the forces of Massachusetts.

An aidship is not a bad position for a novice; he usually acts under explicit instructions, and his responsibility is light. Asahel wrote many scores of letters based on memoranda furnished by the commander-in-chief. He galloped about with messages to Thomas, Putnam, Green, Heath, and other officers. He transmitted reprimands to colonels who did not drill their men, or did not keep their camps clean, or

neglected guard matters. Sometimes he rode grand-rounds; feeling his way by night through all the by-paths and swamps between Mystic River and Roxbury; waking up and blowing up sentinels who had gone to sleep under the lee of fences and haycocks; reporting officers of the guard whom he caught playing checkers or cards in barns; in short, making himself generally dreadful, after the manner of staff-officers.

A number of unpleasant adventures befell him during these nocturnal wanderings. Once he broke his girths in leaping a wall, and had three sombre miles to trudge with his saddle on his back, leading, or rather dragging, his jaded and sleepy horse. Once he had a pack of dogs to beat off with his sabre, not daring to fire his huge pistols lest he should arouse both armies. Another night he missed a bridge, and barely escaped drowning while swimming an oozy rivulet, being determined to get across somehow. Also he had a furious moonlight gallop after a manifest Tory spy, who turned out when caught to be a patriotic country doctor, riding at speed to answer the summons of an old lady (as he genially explained) "whose toe-nail was growing in."

In short, Ash proved himself a zealous staff-officer, and a much better one than he himself believed. He was very eager to master his new business; he looked up veterans of the Seven Years War, and gleaned from their rather dry memories such information as they could furnish; also he read anew Plutarch's lives of Alexander and Caesar, though without finding much concerning the duties of staff-officers. Something, too, was to be learned from Major-General Ward, an able lawyer and respectable judge who had served

against Louisbourg, and was reckoned the Moltke of Massachusetts.

But Asahel's preferred mentor was General Israel Putnam of Connecticut, also a veteran of the last French war. He was a prosperous farmer, of about fifty-seven; his face round, chubby, kindly, humorous, and surmounted by a tousled wealth of iron-gray curls; his figure square, burly, and remarkably muscular. At this time and for long afterward he was a popular hero; partly because of his zeal in the colonial cause, his eagerness for bold operations, and his fame as an adventurous hunter and fighter; but largely also because he represented the American *yeoman*. He may be regarded as the first of those personages whom we have delighted to honor under such names as the Mill Boy, the Rail-Splitter, etc.

"I'm glad to see ye riding your rounds so faithfully," he said to young Farnlee. "The boys are careless, the boys are green. You must follow them up as you would your oxen. It takes a monstrous deal of hawing and geeing for a general to get his plough straight across his meadow. I wish 't we had more men that 's eager to larn; yes, and more that 's able to teach. Let me give ye one important hint, Captain: never believe a thing 's been done till you 've seen it done; never believe it in military matters, at any rate."

Ash cantered away on a tour through some of the regimental camps, to see whether the colonels were carrying out orders in regard to a regular afternoon drill. It was a wonderful series of awkward squads which he inspected, though he little knew the full extent of their ignorance and lubberliness. There were

few competent drill-masters, and there was no generally accepted system of drill. Every captain and colonel had his own notions (if he were lucky enough to have any notions whatever) as to how soldiers should handle their arms, and face, and wheel, and deploy. Not till more than two years later did Steuben and De Kalb teach the Americans to manœuvre with some degree of uniformity and accuracy.

Uniforms were rare except among the officers, who wore as many kinds as though they belonged to a dozen armies. It was impossible to distinguish with certainty between a lieutenant and a colonel. The fit of the garments was what could be produced by the mothers, and wives, and daughters of New England.

The men were of all ages, from white-headed grand-sires to hobbledehoy younkers. But in general they were tall, wiry fellows whose sunburnt hands and faces showed that they were farmers. Here and there was a negro, in some cases serving as a cook, in others as a soldier. It would appear that our national prejudice of color did not become intense until we began to have abolitionists.

As a rule, the officers were of a higher social caste than the rank and file. It would probably have been impossible to get the men of a company to elect as captain a comrade who was not a landholder and a "qualified voter." Americans had not yet discovered that people without property are best fitted to rule those who have property. They had not yet heard that all men are born equal; nobody on earth, if even in the heavens, had heard of it; this revelation did not reach our planet till more than a year later.

Nearly all the soldiers were puritans of the sort

called Congregationalists, or Independents. They were the descendants of men who had fled from Laud's persecution, or of men who had remained in the old land long enough to fight under Fairfax and Cromwell. As a rule, they believed the Bible, and went to "meeting" whenever they could, and refrained from gross vices. Those who swore and broke the Sabbath confessed that they wrought wickedly in so doing, and expected to go to hell for it unless they repented. Now and then some of them got drunk, without divining that they committed sin. Even the solemn chaplains, whom Ash Farnlee saw in every camp, had not heard of the gospel of total abstinence.

The great majority could read and write, though they might spell somewhat by ear, and hold the pen with cramped fingers. And what few books they knew (such as the English Bible, and the works of Bunyan, Baxter, Milton, and Shakspere) were well worth reading several times over, both for purity of diction and weight of matter. Their own spoken English was fairly pure, very slightly marked by local dialects and brogues, and more grammatical than the speech of any other yeomanry in the world. Of course they held to certain pronunciations which in our day would sound antique and plebeian; for instance, they said *natur* instead of *naychur*, and *creetur* instead of *cree-chur*, and *acktually* instead of *ackchually*. America had not yet imported from England that mincing metamorphosis of *t* into *ch*, which England imported from Beelzebub knows where, or perhaps dug up in its own Cockaigne.

No doubt there were sniffling, stammering utterances, and backwoods oddities of phrase and metaphor,

the origins of that form of English celebrated as the Yankee dialect, a sparse and stunted vulgar tongue which novelists glean and gather with no small difficulty, sometimes adding thereto a logical sprig of their own invention. The college-bred Farnlees did not use it, but Abner Sly found it nearly sufficient for the expression of his meagre ideas, and Israel Putnam could be humorously at his ease in it when he chose.

On the whole, these sixteen thousand provincials were better educated than the scornful redcoats, the hireling battalions of Saxon carles and hill Caledonians and bog-trotting Firbolgs, who stared at their loose camps from the Shawmut peninsula. Many of them knew more about the legal rights and wrongs of the case at issue than did the royal governor of Massachusetts, Major-General Thomas Gage. There were among them wiser statesmen than Lord North, and better constitutional lawyers than Mr. Wedderburn.

So far as concerned the two camps alone, the contest lay between a fairly cultured yeomanry, not yet broken to military ways, and a Dorian proletariat from the motherland, trained by the cat into adamantine phalanges. In mere human material, the American army was one of the finest ever seen on this war-trampled planet. If it had possessed plenty of cartridges, plenty of bayonets, a good cavalry, an artillery train, magazines, discipline, drill, regimental traditions, money, and experienced officers, it would have been a most formidable array.

It had scarcely a foreshadowing of these essential elements of martial efficiency. Its only hope of victory lay in zeal, in a pretty general knowledge of woodcraft, in a swift faculty for throwing up field-

works, and in a high average of marksmanship. Frederic the Great, at the head of one third of its number of trained soldiers, would have expected to dislodge and disperse it in four hours. But luckily for American liberty, luckily too for constitutional liberty in the old country, there was nobody resembling Frederic at the head of the solid, scarred battalions which crowded the barracks of Boston.

The provincials were eager for a fight, and Ash Farnlee was among the eagerest. Accordingly, as soon as he had finished his inspection, he cantered over Charlestown Neck to spy out a way of attacking General Gage and Captain Moorcastle. There was an American picket on Bunker Hill, and he halted to see if it appeared to be watchful. Then he pushed on eastward to a rounded spur which was called Breed's Hill, so far as it had a specific name. He was now within easy field-piece range of the city which he longed to deliver.

At his feet lay the five hundred wooden dwellings and shops of Charlestown, and just beyond them shone the yellowish-green waters of the Charles River. Outside that hither shore, perfectly distinct to the naked eye, was the *enemy*. The black ships which lay at anchor in the stream were full of enemies. The red-coated sentry who paced behind the low rampart on Copp's Hill would think it a duty to shoot him on sight, and a pleasure to bayonet him afterwards. The general who commanded in the partially visible city beyond would consider it no more than just to order him to the gallows.

It seemed strange, incredible, monstrous. But Ash found a defiant, pugnacious satisfaction in brooding

over it. If those men wanted to kill him, he also wanted to kill them. He meant to show them that he was their match in war, and to make them acknowledge that he was their equal in peace. His father, and the elders generally, might be satisfied with legal parity. But he ?—not until an American was as good on his own soil as an Englishman; not until he was as good in the eyes of his own countrymen and countrywomen; not until British domination and provincial sycophancy had both perished; not until then would he end *his* battle.

Presently, as he scanned the Boston shore with his spy-glass, he caught sight of two figures on Copp's Hill, a redcoated officer and a lady. Was that Huldah Oakbridge? and was she pointing him out to Captain Moorcastle? He wheeled his horse quicker than if those cannon had been brought to bear upon him, and rode furiously back to the American lines like a man fleeing from his deadliest foe.

He was on the mainland, and had pulled up to breathe Redskin, when he heard a familiar voice twang out his name. There by the roadside, amidst a gang of provincials who were throwing up a breastwork, stood Abner Sly, leaning on a spade and wiping his brow with his shirt-sleeve.

"How de do?" called Abner. "Darned if you don't look Jerusalem-fine," he added, surveying Farnlee's epaulets with approbation.

"What do you think of soldiering?" the Captain asked, for lack of something better to say.

"It's poaty much like farmin', 's fur 's I've got, Capting. I wish we had some calvary, 'n' I was in it."

"If we ever have any, I'll get you into it," promised Farnlee as he cantered away.

CHAPTER XVIII

ABNER AS A TROOPER

ABNER SLY, like most of his regimental comrades, dwelt in a hovel of cobblestones and turf, with a roof of flat rails and straw thatching.

It was not a water-proof residence; and the three respectable young landholders who lodged with him murmured a little at its muddiness; they could not always find a clean spot of floor whereon to hold their morning and evening devotions. But Abner rather liked it, because he could make believe to himself that it was a wigwam; while, in regard to prayer (as he explained to his corporal, Deacon Eliphilet Muzzy), he could take it standing, or lying down, or most anyway; in fact, on a pinch, he could skirmish along without it for a considerable spell; he hadn't been fotched up to be bigoted about it.

As there was no *reveille* in that particular camp, the men got up when they wanted breakfast; and as there was no "lights out," they frequently sat around their bonfires till midnight, or later; some of them talking religion, or politics, or tactics, or telling hunting stories; some moodily wishing they were at home. There was, however, a certain amount of drill, of guard-duty, and of entrenching; and these duties were

performed with zeal and physical vigor, if not with military smartness.

Abner, like most of his comrades, was anxious to be a "peart soldier"; and having a Yankee's aptness at turning his hand to novelties, he soon learned his facings, wheelings, and musket exercise; at all events, he learned the little that his captain was able to teach. Loading and firing he had known all about ever since he could lay a ducking-gun across a log. "Fact is," he affirmed, probably in a figurative sense, "I was weaned on a powder-horn." Entrenching he really liked, because he could see the practical value of a breastwork as a cover, and as a rest for the firelock, and also because he could apply to it that dearly loved word, ambush.

Standing guard by day Abner considered foolishness; for, as he argued, everybody could see then whether the British were coming or not; and, if they should come, it would be no use bawling at them for the countersign. But standing guard by night was another matter: there was a heaping peck of common sense in that, he allowed; and he did his share of it with the cheerful alertness of a watch-dog. Meanwhile he was entirely practical in it; he posted himself behind a rock, or a bush, and "peeked" over it with his gun cocked; and it would have required a suit of steel armor to cross his range unharmed. One night he fired, and the result was death—to a hog.

"Oh, I reckonized the creetur plain enough," narrated Abner to the corporal. "But, durn him, I did n't feel so 'nation sure what was inside his brussels; it might 'a' been a lobster or a rifleman. The Injuns useter play that game on sentries in my dad's time.

Anyhow we 'll have spare-rib for dinner. The Tories need n't send their hogs spyin' 'round our ambuses."

But ere-long the monotony and constraint of camp life became insupportable to this provincial Nimrod; this proprietor in fee simple of forty acres of "plough land, medder, and huckleberry paster"; this free-born Anglo-Saxon whose freedom had luxuriated into continental wildness. His talk lost its queer, humorous turns and picturesque figures of speech. His lean and limber jaws ceased to drawl forth those whimsical exaggerations which Englishmen have learned to wonder at and adore under the name of Yankee stories. He began to brood and to look dyspeptically surly, like a dog who has been too steadily chained to his kennel.

"I'm disappointed," he complained to his captain, a tall, raw-boned man with mild blue eyes and a clerical smile. "I s'posed we sh'd be lurkin' 'round the British 'n' pickin' 'em off day 'n' night. I expect I shall quit to-morrer. Thought I'd mention it."

Now the captain had just received from headquarters some severe orders (which, by the way, he profoundly disapproved of) establishing punishments for wandering from camp without leave. Accordingly it was explained to Private Sly that, if he went off as he proposed, he would be brought back by force, and get thirty lashes.

"Y' don't say!" Abner gasped, elevating his almost invisible eyebrows and dropping his narrow lower jaw. Presently he added, "Wal!—then I guess I'll list in the troop, if there is one. I could stick a sight longer there, for I allays did like hosses."

"But that will be thirty lashes too," the captain sighed. "You can't run about from company to

company. Had n't you better try to feel contented, Farmer Sly? You 're a landholder and a voter, and you don't want to be seized up."

Abner walked slowly to his wigwam, and sat there for many minutes in silence, with elbows on knees and face between his hands, eventually exclaiming in a high thin voice, "By—gum! and this is fighting for freedom!"

Then came another fit of gloomy torpor, which lasted till Corporal Eliphilet Muzzy put him to bed and prayed him to sleep. He had not even been able to smile when told that a foraging party to one of the islands in the Bay had brought away twenty hogs, and tarred and feathered a Tory.

The next day he felt too feeble to drill, and tramped three miles to lay his case before a surgeon, who told him he was homesick and refused to excuse him from duty. On the day following he was really ill, and believed that, if he could not get home, at least for a few minutes, he should die. It seemed to him that he could scarcely stagger to his feet when Muzzy informed him that Captain Farnlee was outside and wanted to see him.

"Oh, Cap-ting!" he whined in a lamentable soprano, shambling forth all doubled up, with his fists pressed into his abdomen. "I 'm most awfully smashed to bits, Cap-ting. I dunno what in natur ails me. If I could only git hum!"

Ash laughed with the hard-hearted scorn of a sound soldier for a complaining one. "That 's just what I want of you," he said. "I want you to go home."

"You *dew!*" exclaimed Abner, straightening up and getting his color back in a breath.

"Yes; go home and get your horse. The General wants some good riders to carry messages; I have had you put on the list for the squadron."

Three days later Abner had finished a brief visit home, and was on duty at Cambridge as a private in Ward's troop of orderlies. The commandant thereof was Lieutenant Brallaghan, an Irishman who called himself an Englishman and spoke the Anglo-Saxon of Dublin. He had been discharged within a twelve-month from the British army, after a service of fourteen years which he had concluded as a sergeant. His height and size, his herculean chest and limbs, his trooperish strut, and straddle, and swagger, corresponded nobly with the martial expression of his huge aquiline face, reddened and diversified all over by smallpox. Of course he had his wounds; and in sore truth he was a grievously scarred veteran, his broad back preserving the marks of several hundred lashes. Many soldiers in those disciplined times lost more blood at the hands of the drummer than at the hands of the enemy.

He was such a splendid creature, so upright, and mighty, and lofty, and high-stepping, that Abner fell in love with him at first sight and told him he looked every inch a soldier. The Lieutenant did not return the compliment; and with regard to Dobbin he was profanely contemptuous.

"Can that dam' runt get over anything?" he enquired in a hoarse bellow.

"He can git over forty or fifty mile of territory as slick as grease," asserted Abner.

"At one jump?" demanded Brallaghan.

Abner burst into a spasm of thin, jerky laughter, and

decided that the Lieutenant was "a 'nation good feller."

Next morning Brallaghan took a training squad into a meadow near headquarters. Several trenches had been dug there, varying in breadth from six feet to twelve. The troopers, who were all New Englanders, perfectly accustomed to galloping over stony fields and through forests, but knowing nothing of leaping obstacles, stared about them with the fearless curiosity of innocence. Brallaghan drew up his line facing the narrowest trench, and, posting himself in front of it, bellowed as follows: "Now, thin, if ye was crossin' a field, an' should come to such a ditch as that, what wud ye do?"

Our friend Abner, always ready to discourse, and feeling intimate with the Lieutenant, replied cheerfully, "Scoot 'round it."

"No ye would n't," shouted Brallaghan, "not if I was after ye, or any other lively man. Well, now, I'll show ye what to do."

He wheeled, struck spurs into his horse, and, dashing up to the trench, went over it superbly. Then he faced about, straightened himself in the saddle, and commanded, "Now, thin, Private Sly, forward! full speed!"

Private Sly advanced softly a length or so, rose in his stirrups, took a long look at the trench, grinned like an anxious monkey, and enquired, "Haow wide is it?"

"Ownly a fadom."

"Only what?"

"Six foot," shouted Brallaghan, beginning to redder in all his pock-marks.

"Six foot!" protested Abner. "Why did n't ye make it six rod?"

"Come! get over it!" bellowed the Lieutenant, drawing his sabre. "Do you want me to thrash you across? Sargint, start that man's hoss for him."

The sergeant, an American who had not yet learned to be a disciplinarian, remonstrated, or rather pleaded, "Try it, Abner."

"Try it yerself," grumbled Abner.

"Sly! are ye comin'?" yelled Brallaghan. "Knock him off his horse, Sargint!"

The sergeant partially unsheathed his sabre, and Abner desperately lashed Dobbin forward. But within six feet of the trench he pulled up with a shrill *Whoa!* leaning back in the saddle and staring affrightedly at Brallaghan.

"I could do it afoot," he bawled. "Don't git mad, Square!"

"I'll Square ye," howled the old soldier, thoroughly infuriated by this civic title, although it was meant to flatter and pacify him.

Abner saw him coming, flaming with brandished steel; he fully expected (as he afterwards gayly and even conceitedly narrated) to be whittled into coarse hash; and, wheeling Dobbin, he fled with neck extended and fins flapping, like a goose prophesying rain. It was his purpose to desert instanter, though he should have to abandon farm and wife, and lurk for years in untrodden wildernesses.

But there was only one entrance to the meadow, and Brallaghan dexterously cut him off from that. Round and round the lot they careered; the fugitive lashing his horse, and the pursuer spurring and hooting like

the Wild Huntsman; while the other recruits watched the chase with a hysterical, egoistic mixture of horror and amusement. Abner caught a glimpse of them grinning after him; and he thought them as selfish as Sin, and as hard-hearted as Apollyon; even in his mortal terror he hated them. At last, seeing that whirling sabre gaining on him, and "scrooching" to escape decapitation, he brought Dobbin up in rear of the squad, stamped it out of his way, and went bang over the trench with a fathom to spare.

"Bravo!" thundered Brallaghan. "Well done, Private Sly! Now, thin, next man; Mixer!"

Abner grinned, not with pleasure over the Lieutenant's applause, but with the spiritual anguish of a creature who believes that he has narrowly escaped death. Trembling in limb and feature, he silently watched the balkings and leapings of his comrades, a little comforted by their frights, and the bad language which they got for the same, but feeling under all exceedingly unforgiving. One after another they cleared the trench, down to a pug-nosed youngster who begged Brallaghan to kill him outright and not force him to commit suicide, but whose beast carried him over like a whirlwind under the storm and stress of broadsword slapping. Neither biped nor quadruped could withstand the old dragoon's clamorous and concussive persuasiveness.

There was a second round, and several of the riders took very kindly to the exercise, especially the pug-nosed hobbledehoy, the youngest of all. But Abner Sly was not one of those who got elated with jumping and wanted to jump more.

"That creetur 'll kill us all, if we 'll let him," was

his belief. " He jest enjoys bullyin' folks, an' scarin' 'em to death, an' breakin' their necks."

Exercise over, he went straight to the quarters of the commander-in-chief, resolved to rid the army of Brallaghan. A negro servant, very likely a slave, received him with pompous indifference, and told him that the General was not at home.

" I s'pose he never is to hum when a poor sojer wants to see him," Abner grumbled, or rather whimpered.

He shambled back to barracks, purposing to make his complaint later. It was a warm day; the men were lounging about with their coats off, and Abner removed his, as well as his shoes and stockings. He was in this costume, sitting on the head of a cider barrel and gnawing at a raw turnip, when an officer in green uniform passed in front of him, strolling toward headquarters. This officer was an elderly man, broad in the chest and very muscular, with a round, sunburnt face and curly, silver-gray hair. He glanced at Abner with an absent-minded smile, the smile one sees on the marble lips of a bust of Vespasian, the expression of a man lifting a heavy weight. It was " Old Put," attired in his veteran rifle-suit, and pondering over the lack of powder in the American magazines.

Abner guessed that this was a general, and he knew that generals ought to be saluted, but he had vague ideas as to the proper form of such salutation. Without getting off his barrel, or ceasing to drum his naked heels against it, he raised his turnip to his forehead and brought it down to his mouth again. Putnam surveyed him smilingly, lifted his cocked hat as if in irony, and tramped ponderously on his way.

In the next instant Abner felt himself hoisted from behind by a powerful hand which gripped his coarse linen neck-band. Then he became aware that he was in the clutch of Lieutenant Brallaghan, and was being shaken about the parade-ground as though he were merely stuffed with straw.

"Is that the way you salute a general officer?" growled the martinet, as a panther might growl to a captive possum. "In yer shirt-sleeves! Sitting on a barrel! Eating a turnip! Stand up there, sir, an' luck at me. This is the way to salute an officer."

And the ex-sergeant went through the performance as if he were a high-born cavalier doing noble reverence to his cousin the king.

"Now, sir, let me see you do that," he ordained. "And now, sir" (when Abner had done his slinking best), "Ged dem you, sir! go to your quarters and put on your uniform—your clothes, I mane. And let me tell you, sir, Ged dem you, sir! that if I ever catch you again saluting an officer from a barrel, you 'll get thirty lashes across that very barrel, Ged dem you, sir!"

As long as Abner lived he never sat down on a barrel without calling to mind the affright and ignominy of this interview. Without stopping to pick up his remnant of turnip, he tottered away to his shanty, and put on his coat and shoes. But he was not yet disciplined in spirit, and, having learned that the general in green uniform was that popular hero, Old Put, he resolved to complain to him of this man-eating Brallaghan.

The rustic veteran, seated on a rush-bottomed chair in General Ward's portico, looked up pleasantly when

he saw before him a fairly spruce soldier who saluted him with unusual smartness.

"Ginral!" began Abner with the abruptness of just indignation, "I was promoted into the calvary yes'r-day, an' now I'd like to git back into the infantry."

"Oh, you're in the troop," returned Putnam in the countrified tone and dialect which he always assumed when talking with humble people. "You're under Lieutenant Brallaghan."

"I be!" said Abner with the injured sternness of a saint who has been put into purgatory by mistake. "An' I'd ruther be under Beelzebub."

"Oh, oh! tut, tut!" answered Putnam, apparently reprobating the spiritual recklessness of the remark, rather than its insubordination. "What's yer name? Abner Sly, eh? Well, that's a good name; that indicates sconce. I knew some Slys once. They were peart hunters—wonderful peart hunters. Well, Abner, what's the trouble?"

Abner stated his case from his own point of view, being comfortably incapable of discerning any other. He had saluted the General the best he knew how, whereupon the Lieutenant had half strangled him, shaken him all around the lot, and threatened him with thirty lashes. The tears came into his eyes and voice as he spoke.

"'N' by gum!" he concluded, "if he shakes me like that once more, there won't be enough left of me to take thirty lashes."

"Well, he *was* pretty sudden with ye, was n't he, Abner?" sympathized the General in his flat, kindly monotone, still retaining his mechanical, forced, and worried smile, as though he were thinking of the empty

American magazines rather than of the case before him.

"Sudden?—yes! I sh'd say so! Though he don't leave off s' quick 's he ketches holt. I 'm kind o' spry-tempered myself. But I never seen nobody afore who had s' little self-control 's this man. He biles over a mile from the fire. An' then he 's the hastest creetur, Ginral! Why, he reely ain't safe to have in the camp. He 'll kill more of that troop than the red-coats will; an' p'rhaps that 's what he 's jined us for. He 's got some ditches out there to larn us to jump, an' he put me at one that was six foot over, every 'tarnal inch on 't. Wal, I admit, Ginral, that I did n't want to jump it at fust sight, 's you may say. I wanted to git acquainted with it, an' try at it a few times in my mind, an' eddicate myself up to it gradually. But darn my skin if he did n't whip out his cutlash, an' hunt me all reound the medder, an' finally skeer me slap over."

Old Put could keep his gravity no longer. He bent forward, grasped his thick knees with his broad hands, and roared out a farmer's hearty laugh.

"Say, Abner," he queried, "do ye know what I 'd do if he should come at me with his cleaver and order me to jump that ditch?"

"Give him thirty lashes?" suggested Abner, hopefully.

"No! I should n't dast stop to think on 't. I should git over that ditch, somehow, quicker 'n powder."

Our grumbler began to divine that Lieutenant Brallaghan was not going to be punished for his suddenness and his harshness.

" 'Abner,' " resumed the General, " I had an awful unpleasant man to work for me once; oh, he was an awful tough man to bear with. But that man knew a lot-full of things that I wanted to know; and so I put up with all his temper and impudence till I 'd larned them; and then we parted company the friendliest we could. Now here 's this leftenant knows all about troopering, and he reely wants to larn it to ye, and it 's very important that ye should larn it, and larn it as quick as may be. It 's important to yerself and important to the army. Why, supposin' there 's a battle to-morrow, and you are carrying orders for Ginral Ward, and there 's half a dozen British dragoons after ye, and a six-foot ditch ahead? Now I guess ye could jump it; but yesterday ye would n't 'a' dast try; ye 'd 'a' been caught and the orders seized. I know the Leftenant is hash; I 've noticed it. But there ain't much time to spare; the Leftenant wants ye to git yer lessons right off; he wants ye to take notice, and not be all day about it. And had n't you better be lively and zealous? D' ye ever try, Abner, to plough back'ards—look one way and plough t' other?"

" 'T would n't take a plough 'crost the lot very straight," conceded our agricultural cavalryman.

" Well, then, don't make war that way. Look the same way ye drive. Put in yer best good-will. Be the heartiest soldier in the camp. That 's what the Leftenant wants of ye; and that 's what the province wants of ye; yes, and the Ginral Congress. I wish, Abner—lordy, lordy, how I do wish it!—that I had as good a teacher in my duties as you have in yourn."

The veteran's absent-minded smile returned to his lips, and Abner inferred from it that he was at liberty

to depart. He had saluted when he came, and now he saluted again, though he was shamefaced about it to the point of spiritual anguish.

"That's right," said Old Put, slightly raising his brown right hand in response. "Now do that to the Leftenant, if you meet him. I'll bet a pumkin-pie he won't shake ye for it."

Then, as Abner straddled away, the Vespasianic smile followed him with an air of sympathy and pity. "Oh, for powder!" muttered the General. "If Gage should come out, he could destroy us. And these poor boys, who think it so hard to be shaken a bit, how they would be mowed down and bayoneted!"

Abner, marching pensively back to his quarters, encountered the awful Brallaghan and saluted him.

"Very well!" cried the Lieutenant, sincerely gratified. "Just one thing lacking, though. Ye should 'a' lucked me straight in th' oye. Now remimber that nex' time; luck me straight in the oye. By Jupiter! you 'll make a soldier yet; an' your wild horse can jump, too, fat as he is."

CHAPTER XIX

ABNER AS A FORAGER

IT would be tedious to narrate all Abner's adventures in carrying official messages and orders. Those documents were many, but for a time they brought about nothing of importance, not even to so trivial a creature as Private Sly.

The Americans could not attack Boston for lack of ammunition, and the English dared not sally upon Cambridge for lack of a sufficient number of troops. Thus both General Artemas Ward and General Thomas Gage were much at a loss as to how they could carry on war against each other.

But eventually it occurred to Ward that he might possibly starve out Gage if he should cut off his supplies. An American mosquito fleet was begun with a view to capturing British transports and merchantmen; and bodies of provincials were sent to strip the neighboring Massachusetts shores of poultry, sheep, cattle, and other provant.

Thus it happened that, toward the end of May, 1775, Trooper Sly bore a letter to Colonel Gerrish at Chelsea, directing him to send a foraging party to Hog and Noddle Islands; and, as Abner considered himself a sort of staff-officer, and was moreover very fond of adventures which promised fun and spare-ribs, he remained to take part in the expedition. The re-

sult was that he once more came into collision with the armed might of the mother country. While the Yankees were wringing the neck of the last Hog Island turkey, and running down the final representative of its slab-sided, light-footed, loud-squealing swine, a fleet of launches slid spectrally through the morning mist, and landed a swarm of Britons bent upon butchery and breakfast.

Hog Island rang with the clatter and shouting of a protracted skirmish. The Americans, who had more poultry than bullets, were soon driven over to the mainland; but there, cheered by re-enforcements under Putnam and Warren, they renewed the combat. The old hero of Pomfret, eager to get at close grapple with the enemy, waded nearly up to his middle in the slimy shallows, an audacious feat for a man of fifty-seven years who must have known something of rheumatism.

Erelong a couple of English gunboats sounded their way up the green waters of the Bay, and added their four-pound thunder to what General Burgoyne might have called "the horror and importance of the scene." One of them got aground, and was cannonaded to a wreck and abandoned. In the end the provincials scored a little victory, losing four slightly wounded, and capturing a dozen small cannon, or swivels, besides saving their forage of live stock. The English, it was cheerfully reported, had twenty killed and fifty wounded. So encouraging was this skirmish to the colonies, and so important did it appear to the General Congress at Philadelphia, that Putnam was made major-general in the as yet unorganized "continental army," though the commission did not reach him till after the battle of Bunker Hill.

But there was one missing Yankee, and that Yankee was Private Sly. When last seen by his friends he was in shirt-sleeves, clinging to the ears of Hog Island's ultimate porker, and so being borne lengthwise, head-foremost, in the direction of the as yet undiscovered British. It will save time to take up his history some hours later in the quarters of Gracious Majesty's commandant at Boston.

General Gage was at this period particularly gloomy and cross. A year previous he had written to England that with two thousand disposable British bayonets he could put down the party of resistance in the colonies. Now he had nearly five thousand, and he dared not set foot outside of the Barrier, and the Yankees were bushwhacking his sentries. That bygone brag would have been afflicting to remember, only that he hardly ever called it to mind. He had enough to plague him in the present, without looking up annoyances in the past.

"This is a doosid pretty way to treat *me!*!" he grumbled to his favorite aid. "Here I want infantry, artillery, and cavalry; I want ten thousand more men at this point, this very instant; and what do I get? The *Cerberus* comes in with a single battalion, and three generals armed with fish-poles. Howe and Clinton and Burgoyne thought they had been ordered to a land of gentle peace, with Isaak Walton for commander-in-chief. Brought their fishing tackle with 'em, begad! as though the Yankees were perch and mullet. Good Ged, Moorcastle! what does it mean? Will those sluggards at home never wake up?"

And thereupon he dictated the heads of a communication declaring that he must have fifteen thousand

men at Boston, ten thousand at New York, and seven thousand in Canada, or he would not answer for the consequences.

Moorcastle retired to write out the letter, and the General went on muttering to himself: "One battalion, and three generals with fish-poles! Are the grenadiers to have fish-poles also, and carry their wums in their cartridge-boxes? I wish I dared ask the Secretary that question. Does he *never* read my reports, I wonder? Good Ged! what is the use of a ministry, anyway? A drumhead court martial would manage public affairs a thousand times better. His Majesty is outrageously bubbled by those cursed political quacks and tricksters.

"And where the doose is Eastwold?" he added, bethinking himself of another grievance. "I sent Eastwold off day before yesterday—no, it was last evening—to get some provisions and prisoners. Why don't he bring 'em? *Come in!*" he suddenly bellowed; for some one had knocked at the door. Whoever it was, and whatever he came about, the General was disposed to fly at him. But his bark, as is usual with vociferous creatures, was worse than his bite. The moment the door opened, he gave a grunt which signified that he meant to have patience, and sat down in his most comforting elbow-chair to listen.

The officer who entered was quite a young man, the junior aid at general headquarters, Lieutenant Gordon Eastwold. In person he was of a type which is so common in England that it has been selected by French caricaturists to represent the *Anglais*. He was tall and slender, with rather narrow shoulders, a long and smallish head, a reddish-blond skin, an aquiline profile, mild

blue eyes, a retreating chin, and an embarrassed manner. His uniform was daubed from heels to collar with mud, and he glanced at it with an expression of shamefaced apology.

The general compassionated him, and began his catechism leniently. "Well, Mr. Eastwold, any prisoners?"

"Ah—yes—one, General," said the Lieutenant in a stammer which one might judge to be habitual with him. "But I am not so very sure that he is one of their—their military. He was in shirt-sleeves; and he says he belongs there—on the island, I mean."

"No prisoners!" the commandant grumbled and whimpered in a tenuous, plaintive voice.

Eastwold winked as though somebody had struck at him. It was obvious that he was sensitive, and that he knew he was not a favorite, like the Honorable Captain Moorcastle.

"I wanted some prisoners," repeated the General, plaintively. "I wish the men would n't bayonet those beggars as they do. It makes the Yankees run like the devil, or fight like the devil. Why, good Ged, I 'm in awful need of prisoners," he insisted, getting up and tramping about the room. "I can't obtain any information that I can rely upon. These loyalists tell me what they hope, and what they fear, as if it were all fact; they are no more worth listening to than an old maid who thinks she has been chased by a grenadier. Why, what rubbish and ravelings that Hutchinson used to spin off to me! I want prisoners! Demme, I must put a stop to this inconsiderate and stupid bayoneting. I do believe the majority of the men who practise it are bloody pol-

troons who halt to finish a wounded man because they are afraid to go ahead and collar a sound one. Remind me to issue an order on this subject."

The veteran was thoroughly sulky over his disappointment as to getting captives and information. He scowled at the staff-officer without seeing him any more than if he had been a formless ghost. The young fellow imagined that he was being censured, and his long, mild face showed a spasmodic grimace of trouble. He was too much worried to perceive that the burly commandant, strutting mechanically up and down in his gorgeous uniform, was at least as worried a man as himself.

"Well—you got some supplies?" his Excellency grunted.

"Only one—one beast, General,—a swine," the aid stammered with a humble smile. "He was captured with the man," he added, eager to say something, no matter what, to delay the storm of reprimand which he feared was coming. "The—the fact is, they—they both ran into us—in quite a peculiar manner." And the narrator, glancing at his soiled clothing, blushed painfully.

"One—*hog!*!" roared the disgusted General, glaring at poor Eastwold as though he meant *him*. "That's a doosid pretty return of results! Did we get the whole of him? or only a part?—Well, what did we lose?"

"A small gunboat, which ran aground, and perhaps twenty killed and wounded."

The General merely scowled and sat down, as though he were dizzy, or as though the enormity of the failure had stricken him dumb.

"Well, Mr. Eastwold," he presently added with a

moan, " send him in here; I don't mean the hog,—the man!"

The aid took this detail of instruction for a satire upon his own understanding, and retired with a look of scared humiliation which the General would have compassionated, if generals in those days could have noticed such trifles.

Presently lank and gawky Abner Sly, coatless and tattered and dirty, was ushered in by a spick-and-span grenadier, the cleanest soldier on that day's guard. A truly beautiful man of war he was, six feet high and shapely throughout, with the loveliest pink and white complexion, features of Hellenic mould, and hazel eyes full of light and tenderness. He saluted, and Private Sly came near saluting also, but remembered himself in time, and made a rustic scrape.

For Abner, when captured, had sought to escape by means of a lie, without being conscious that it was a lie, such was his fright and confusion of spirit. He had claimed in voluble haste that he was a resident of Hog Island, and that the porker whereon he rode was his own property, which he was trying to save from the rebels. The fib once told, he was like a man who has made a bargain with Satan: he had a comrade that haunted and afflicted and scared him; a comrade that would not be got rid of.

" Well, sirrah! where 's your uniform ?" demanded the General. " What business have you to be fighting the king's troops in citizen toggery ?"

Abner made a struggle to rally his courage and his wits; he *must* recollect that he was a native-born Hog Islander.

" Ginral, I warn't fighting; I was arter my shoat,"

he managed to stammer. But his very lack of self-possession, coupled with his natural gawkiness, gave him an air of veracity and innocence.

"Do you mean to tell me, you rogue," persisted the General, "that you don't belong to the rebel militia?"

"*I dew!*" affirmed Abner. It was a comfort to him, even in that awful moment, to perceive that he was not exactly lying. The inquisitor had so framed the question that it could be answered in the affirmative without literally stating an untruth.

The General did not note his own blunder, nor divine Abner's prevarication. The dawn of a faint smile wrinkled the semi-dropsical setting of his grim, soldierly eyes. Abner was a typical Yankee; or rather he was a caricature Yankee, a regular down-east Yankee Doodle. As the stout, rosy Englishman surveyed that gaunt, lantern-jawed figure, he could not help feeling a little genial scorn of it, and a desire to have some fun out of it.

"What were you charging my marines for?" he snorted with a transparent pretence of indignation.

Abner noted the change in Gage's face and recovered somewhat of his native cheek. He divined what was expected of him: he was to make sport for this grandee from the motherland; to play the part of a colonial clown; to be a Yankee Doodle. Of course he did not hesitate except just so long as was necessary to summon up his continental imagination.

"Wal, now, Ginral, I 'll tell ye all abeout it," he began. "That grunter was mine; he was my own partickler, lawful grunter; I raised him from a shoat. Wal, he was a beauty. I wish to gracious you could 'a' seen him, Ginral; wish 't I knew where he was neow."

He must 'a' weighed—wal, now, lemme calc'late a bit
—he must 'a' weighed fourteen stun."

Here Abner, to ease his conscience, was fixing his memory on a porker which he had really bred during the previous year; and the air of abstraction which this mental effort brought into his countenance gave him the exact expression of a painstaking truth-teller.

" Of course I did n't hanker to lose any sech grunter as that," he continued. " And when the rebels come over to grab our live stock, I put right out without my coat to see if I could save Joe. Wal, they was arter him, and he was a-dodgin' 'em right 'n' left, gruntin' 'n' blowin' like a porpus. You oughter 'a' seen, Ginral, how he laid 'em out, fust one a-sprawlin', an' then another. Why, that grunter jest outmanoovred an' whipped half a rigiment of them rebels. An' then, when he 'd piled up a haycock of 'em, he 'd look around an' snort, as much as to say, ' Has any of 'em got away ? ' "

The General was grinning now; not because the story was very, very funny, but because the man was *such* a Yankee Doodle! He would have another amusing reminiscence of the Americans to relate at dinners in London society, and among the high-born people who frequented the country-house of his father, the viscount.

Abner, on his part, was amazed at his own lying glibness, and had a suspicion that he was possessed of the devil. But a fearful necessity was upon him, and he swept on down the cataract of his inventions, feeling a little easier as he approached the only part of the story which was true.

" Wal, arter they 'd gin him up, I sot in to coax him

back to the sty. But the creetur had got wild; an' when I ketched a friendly holt on his ears, he bolted; and as I was determined not to let go, we travelled around a spell. I was lying full along, face down and eyes shet, when somebody lit on me astraddle, and kinder fell over me, head towards the tail, an' rid a while that way. Next we three went through a snarl of men who hollered an' charged arter us like good sojers; an' then we two rolled off together, an' the grunter kept on by himself without stoppin' to snicker. Wal, Ginral, your honor may reckon I was consid'able surprised when I found that I 'd bust into one of your rigiments an' run off with one of your kurnels. That 's all there was to it. No harm meant, an' not much done. An' now, Ginral, I 'd be most dreadful obleeged to ye, if ye 'd send me back to Hog Island."

His Excellency stopped grinning. To his jaded mind, fretted with military responsibilities, the Yankee Doodle story had not proved so amusing as he had hoped. Moreover, he did not believe it; at any rate, not all of it. He signed Abner away from him, and signed the Apollonian orderly to approach.

"Get this fellow drunk," he whispered, handing the soldier a guinea. "If he lets out that he is a militiaman, bring him back to me."

"Am I hoff duty for it, General?" enquired the man, saluting; and, receiving a nod, he made another salute, and beckoned Abner to follow.

CHAPTER XX

ABNER AS A CAPTIVE

THE grenadier, marching as superbly as a duke, and even a great deal more superbly, conducted Abner to a little dirty tavern now extinct, situated in an alley long since vanished.

"The General told me to give you a good supper, friend," he explained. "He can't send you back to the heyland till to-morrow."

"The Ginral 's a gentleman," declared Abner. "He 's jest as nice a man 's a poor fellah could want to meet."

The grenadier made no reply, either because he did not agree with the opinion, or because he was wrapt in contemplation of the guinea, which he carried in his hand for lack of a pocket.

"What might your name be?" enquired Abner, surveying the military automaton sidelong, and wishing he were as handsome.

"Higg—John Higg. It 's short, but it means me,—the 'ole of me." And Higg chuckled as a man may over a venerable joke which he knows to be a good one.

The rest of the walk was accomplished in silence. The grenadier looked at his guinea, tested it with the tip of his tongue, and slapped it from one palm to

the other. Abner was not only troubled in mind, but he was nearly speechless with hunger and fatigue. Incredible as it may seem, the moral anguish of telling all those fibs to the General had been terrible to this low-bred specimen of a New Englander, and had helped greatly to increase his sense of mental and physical exhaustion. There was some puritanism in him, some reverence for the commandments, some dread of going to hell for breaking them.

Presently they were in the dining-room of the tavern. The landlord, a stocky little Dubliner who had come over as sutler to an Irish regiment (and who later became a lieutenant in Crean Brush's battalion of "Loyal Americans"), gave the grenadier a rather surly welcome, but brightened up at sight of the guinea.

"'Ave us in a couple of stews," said Higg. "Fresh beef, you hunderstand; none of your salt 'orse."

He was pathetically hungry himself. The British soldier of that day, with his one slice of bread for supper, was often very hungry of an evening, and if he were a young fellow and not used to such starving, sometimes cried himself to sleep.

"And a quart of Jamaica rum," added Higg. "None of your cursed New England."

"No, none of yer fo'penny stuff," assented Abner, who was lighting a candle at the fireplace, for night was falling.

He began to like his grenadier; he wanted to pay him a compliment. "You 've got a pooty good kaaf of yer own," he said, glancing at Higg's noble lower members and then at his own lean shanks.

"Yes, an' it 's been wittles an' drink to me. Many 's

the time them trotters has stood up be'ind a gentleman's kerridge. I wish they was stannin' up be'ind one now."

Abner, who had taken Higg for some kind of a lord reduced to the ranks, was surprised to hear him express himself so meekly. "But they can't straddle from here there," he suggested, by way of expressing sympathy.

"No, they can't," admitted the grenadier gloomily. He sighed, looked at his guinea by the candle-light, and rang it on the bare wooden table. "Them 's the jolly beggars for me," he chuckled. "I wish there was more of 'em. They don't coin enough. There ain't enough of 'em in the hands of the people."

"Do you git paid in *them*?" enquired Abner, ogling the gold piece.

"Not hoffener than once a week," grinned Higg, who had once been on recruiting duty, and remembered some of the gags of that cajoling service. "I say, ole bandy-legs," he added to the landlord, "let 's 'ave some beer along o' the stews, and the rum to top hoff with."

He was pleasurable aware that Abner was gazing at him with stupefaction. Never in all his life had our Yankee seen any two-legged creature, feathered or unfeathered, so topping as this rooster of a grenadier; never had he, franklin of forty acres though he was, spoken to any humble human being, not even to a pagan negro slave, so arrogantly as Higg spoke to the Irish taverner.

The beer came in the guise of a bottle of Dublin porter. The grenadier loftily poured out a foaming mug of it, and pushed it across the table to his guest,

saying genially, "Ain't 'e 'ansomely powdered? Knock 'is 'ead hoff for 'im."

But Abner was unacquainted with this black liquor, and consequently believed that he should not like the taste of it. After surveying it for a moment, with his head on one side like a bird, he said, "Guess I'll leave that to your honor. When the rum happens along, I'll know which eend to catch holt of."

Higg hesitated, as Cæsar did at the Rubicon. He remembered that his duty was to stay sober, and get the Yankee Doodle drunk. But the foam was going, and he emptied the pewter. Then the smoking stews were brought in, and the two famished men went at them like lions. Indeed, they had such appetites that Higg presently called out, "Hey, there, bandy-legs! horder hup a seckont pair of the same color."

At this moment another soldier entered, a man as ugly as John Higg was handsome, for his face was horribly disfigured by smallpox, and also splashed with a broad blue stain, the effect of a powder explosion. Higg greeted him boisterously, and drawing him into a corner of the room, informed him of his business with the Yankee.

"Blazes!" muttered the newcomer. "I wish old Puffy would detach somebody to get *me* drunk."

"'Op hup be'ind!" replied Higg, roaring a laugh which showed his handsome teeth. "Oh! Teague there! bile another stew and crack another bottle."

Then he introduced his comrade to Abner as Blue Peter, the very best fellow in the battalion, not to say in the garrison. The American arose and shook Peter's hand with an air of respect which made the two soldiers

wink at each other, as not being used to such civility in their own country.

"Blue Peter is wuth it," grinned Higg as they took seats. "He's the cursedest rogue we 'ave. He's seen the world, Peter 'ave. He's been most heverything, hup to a bloody pirate, ain't you, Peter?"

"In the South Seas," said Blue Peter in the hoarse voice of a viking, and with something of the pride of one.

Abner surveyed him with a mixture of envy, respect, and alarm, wondering if he had ever walked a plank, and why he had not been hung in chains.

Presently the stews arrived, and the trio fell to eating heartily, for Blue Peter was even hungrier than the others, having swapped his evening ration of bread for a glass of liquor. Meantime the Jamaica rum was broached, and the drinking commenced in earnest. John Higg, mindful of the General's orders, laid himself out to get Abner drunk and make him blab; while Blue Peter, having no duty on his conscience, poured down tumblerful after tumblerful for his own pleasure. Two bottles vanished, and still the supposed rebel had said nothing to incriminate himself, so thoroughly had his head been seasoned by years of exposure to native rum and cider. It was dreadful to John Higg to see so much liquor going down other people's gullets. He roared for a third bottle of rum, and commenced drinking freely himself.

Ere long they were all three as jolly and boisterous as men could wisely be in Boston, whether then or now. Blue Peter sang a piratical love-song of a lachrymose character, which naturally set Abner to singing Old Hundred, or the nearest he could come to it.

John Higg, leaning his powdered head against the wall, tried to beat time to both melodies, and occasionally threw in a chorus which belonged to neither. At last the landlord (they could see no reason for his behavior) ordered them to leave the house, and threatened to call the patrol, whereupon they upset the table and departed.

They went off arm in arm, Abner in the middle. It was a wonderful reconciliation between the colonies and the mother country. Our provincial thought that he had never so loved anybody in his life as he loved these two British lobsters, who perhaps had bayoneted some of his fellow-townsmen during the expedition to Lexington and Concord. Every few steps he unlocked arms and shook hands with them both, and invited them to come and see him. Sometimes he asked them out to his farm, and sometimes to Hog Island, and sometimes to General Ward's headquarters.

But John Higg and Blue Peter did not care one straw whether he were a good loyalist, or a soldier in the rebel army, or the Great Mogul. They swore that he was the best fellow in the world, and toppled against each other in grasping at his vacillating hand, and then reeled on again with their arms around his neck.

Of course the singing was resumed, the buccaneer love-song and Old Hundred and various other airs, diversified by much hurrahing. And then, all of a sudden, quite unexpectedly and incomprehensibly, there came a difficulty with somebody, or rather with several somebodies, the most conspicuous of whom, to Abner's blinking vision, was a lantern. John Higg and Blue Peter fought like the British lion and unicorn, flooring the lantern and knocking somebody else on

top of it, and then vanishing in a wild hurly-burly of buffeting and swearing. As for Private Sly, he never in his life knew how the battle turned out, and did not have a suspicion of what became of himself till next morning.

He awoke in a barn. At first he took it for granted that it was his own barn. He lay quite still and contented until he remembered that he had a wife, and that she might discover him there. This startling idea gave him energy enough to sit up and peer out of the hollow of loose hay in which he had been sleeping. The interior of the barn could not be made to look familiar, although he stared at it for several minutes without winking. There was a loose shingle in the siding near him, and he loosened it a little more in order to peep out, for he wanted to know what country he was in. It was broad daylight, and he saw several houses near by, but all of them strange to him.

Then he discovered that he was in uniform; only it was not a blue uniform; it was a red one. This circumstance confounded him utterly for a time. Was he a Yankee or an Englishman? He stared perseveringly at the scarlet sleeve of his coat, trying to establish a clear recollection of his previous life, or at least the previous day of it. Little by little various things came back to him: the foraging, the capture, the British General, John Higg, and Blue Peter; he recalled them slowly, the sober incidents first and then the drunken ones.

But he could not make out how he had got into that lobster uniform. Had somebody given it to him? Or had he stolen it? He took the coat off, and looked it all over, inside and out. It was a venerable gar-

ment, worn and stained with service; such a coat as beggars sometimes obtained by haunting the barracks; a coat which smelled of the guard-house and the jail. Of a sudden he recollected the street fight; and he conjectured that he had whipped one of the patrolmen and despoiled him; he hoped, with a gasp of alarm, that he had not killed him. He was about to hide the coat under the hay, with the intent of sneaking out of the barn and flying to the ends of the earth in his shirt-sleeves, when a door opened and a cheery voice called, "Well, neighbor, how do you find yourself?"

Abner made a struggle to master his wits, and drawled out, "Wal,—fact is I find myself consid'able astonished."

The stranger was a tall, vigorous man of forty, with a broad and coarsely featured but intellectual face, and the air of a person of superior social standing. He had a white sash tied around his left arm, but otherwise he was attired like a civilian, the cloth fine and the cut stylish.

"I suppose you don't remember much about it," he said. "You must understand that you are a member of the Regulators—the Town Guard."

"*I be?*" returned Abner, with a rising inflection of interrogation bordering on denial.

"Yes; you enlisted last night. You were a little lively; but still you enlisted. I suppose that settles it."

Abner reflected; or rather he acted under the momentum of circumstances: he let himself lie where he had tumbled.

"Wal!" he assented. The word seemed to be sufficient for the situation; moreover, it revealed nothing

and it promised nothing. Then he added, "Am I swore in?"

"You swore in before me. I am Justice of the Peace and Captain of the Guard. My name is Timothy Ruggles."

"All right, Square—Caption. How about vittles and pay?"

"Shilling a day; rations regular. Come along and get your breakfast."

This is what had happened. The respectable Tories of the Town Guard, disgusted with overmuch watching and warding, were looking about for substitutes, and naturally sought them among the impoverished loyalist refugees from the country. Abner Sly, arrested in the company of two British grenadiers, and being able to stammer somewhat of his Hog Island fiction, had been seized upon as a good enough Regulator, and sworn in before he entirely lost the power of speech. His red coat was one of a batch of discarded uniforms which had been turned over by the military hospital to the Guard.

Abner found breakfast and several gormandizing Regulators in Squire Ruggles' generous kitchen. He drank his taxed tea, and ate his loyal johnny-cake and baked beans, with the downcast, lurking air of a dog who cannot forget that he is a sheep-stealer. What if some authentic Hog Islander should turn up among his new comrades? What if John Higg should drop in and tell him that General Gage was waiting for him? Then came the consoling reflection that Higg and Blue Peter were probably in limbo, and would not be likely to emerge therefrom till they had had their thirty lashes apiece, or possibly thirty dozen.

As his alarm diminished, by mere dint of eating heartily, he began to ponder projects of escape. Could he not, perchance, obtain from Captain Ruggles a leave of absence and a pass to Hog Island, or to some other point beyond the British lines? But it would not do to show overmuch haste to get out of Boston; he must not apply for a pass till the morrow, or even the day after. Thus he meditated, believing the while that he was in peril of being hung, but finding himself surprisingly cool about it. He was resolved that no British rope should grip his neck, if any utmost adroitness of Yankee wit could prevent it. Meantime it was a pleasure to note that his debauch had not left him a headache, nor any shakiness of the nerves.

"It was good rum," he said to himself as he impudently held out his pewter plate for another helping of pork and beans.

CHAPTER XXI

ABNER AS A "REGULATOR"

ABNER SLY served longer than he liked in the ranks of the Regulators, for passes out of the city were not to be had, especially by men in the loyal service.

He saw things in Boston that he did not enjoy seeing, and met people whom he would have been glad to avoid. For instance, he one day espied preparations for a catting on the Common; and such was the audacity of his curiosity that he sauntered up to the ring of spectators. The man bound to the gun-carriage was handsome John Higg, and at the first lash across those white shoulders Abner felt a sympathetic tingling in his own back, and skulked away from the scene without waiting for a second whirl of the cat.

Another time he saw the powder-specked face of Blue Peter through one of the grated windows of the jail; and he skipped trembling around the nearest corner to dodge the bleared eyes of that piratical boon companion. Others of his adventures in Boston were interesting, but not enough so as to half scare him to death. An elderly clergyman complimented him fulsomely on the uniform he bore, fondly patting the patched old red coat which Abner would have been

delighted to kick into the gutter, and boasting that he also was a refugee from Gomorrah.

"I am too gouty myself for service," said Uncle Fenn, for it was no other. "But I rejoice to see my countrymen putting on the scarlet robes of righteousness. More and more will do it. Heaven has not left this people altogether to blindness of mind and hardness of heart. And the firm battalions of England,—sublime old England! irresistible old England!—are hastening on the wings of the wind to our help. Every week transports—one feels like calling them transports of joy—bring fresh centuries of those noble fellows in red," smiled the old gentleman, stepping feebly aside to make room for a staggering grenadier. "There must be five thousand—eight thousand—I know not how many thousand—of his Majesty's troops in Boston. And generals too! men bred to war from their youth up! men who shout 'Ha! ha!' among the trumpets! The *Cerberus* fetched in Howe, and Burgoyne, and Clinton. Just think of that noble utterance of Burgoyne: 'We will soon make elbow-room!' Things will move before long. We shall witness a terrible going forth against those misguided sons of rebellion."

"Any sawt of a notion when?" queried Abner, wondering if he could pick up some important bit of news and get back to Cambridge with it.

"At the hour established in the counsels of Paradise," said the parson.

"Wal—yes—jess 's likely 's not," conceded Abner. But he decided to enquire otherwheres concerning the British movements. Paradise was a long way off, he hoped; and moreover it might not be on good terms with General Gage.

He did not doubt as to the sortie; for this respectable old Tory seemed to be sure of it (though he was not); and the thing was of course probable enough in itself. But he cudgelled his brains in vain for a person to whom he could apply for particulars of date and route. He had had an interview with the British commander-in-chief; but he did not feel intimate with him, and was very averse to meeting him again. John Higg and Blue Peter would also be uncomfortable persons to encounter, and moreover would probably have but a vague knowledge of the military future.

He was still pondering his problem when Captain Ruggles told him that the Regulators were to be trained by a regular, and that he must be on hand for exercise that afternoon. Such was his fright that he came near asking if the drill-master were named John Higg or Blue Peter; and he secretly resolved to quit Boston at once, though he should have to run the gauntlet of General Gage's sentries and frigates. But an hour later he had decided, as we mortals often do in a pinch, that he would wait to see what might turn up.

What turned up was a British soldier of a species entirely new to the experience, or even to the imagination, of Abner Sly. Not long after dinner, as he was lounging in the spacious barn which served the Regulators for a muster-room, a man in scarlet uniform quietly entered. He had one of those dark, worn, settled, serious faces which look middle-aged at thirty, or under. There were the patient mouth and the far-off gaze in the eyes, so characteristic of the disciplined, war-tried veteran. But there was something more in that sunburned visage: there was an expression of serene earnestness and of solemn tenderness; an air

which made Abner think of ministers and of the holy dead.

He touched his hat civilly, and stated that he was Private John Randon, on command to drill the Town Guard. A burr in his utterance, and also his steady, monotonous, bassoon-like voice, both seemed outlandish to our Yankee. Private Sly comprehended Private Randon with some difficulty, and queried whether he were an Irishman, or a Welshman, or some more remote kind of a foreigner.

"Wal!—ain't it ruther airly?" he demanded, in his own pure English. "Guess you 'd better squat an' wait a spell."

Private Randon seated himself on a wooden bench, keeping his back straight and drawing his heels close together, as if he were to be inspected in that position. It was discoverable in his mere attitude that he had become one of those human machines whom a word of command moves steadily up to the cannon's mouth, no matter what may be their inward shrinkings from death or suffering.

Our native-born thunderbolt of war had vastly more of the feline litheness and freedom of nature. He doubled up easily upon an inverted tub, turned his head aslant over the right shoulder, curved his long back into the outline of a new moon, grasped and uplifted one limber knee with his bony hands, and, taking sight across it, made a full-length detailed survey of Private Randon, his clean red coat with its clean blue facings, his pipe-clayed shoulder-belt, his spotless buff breeches, his black half-gaiters, his brightly polished shoes, and his shining brass buckles. He looked at him from top to toe, and then he looked at him from toe

to top. Finally he spat out of the right-hand corner of his mouth, wiped his cheek against the knob of his shoulder, and tranquilly snuffled the following remarks, not speaking in a tone of colonial subserviency and humility, but rather in a compassionately inquisitive strain, as a bird of the wild-wood might discourse to a bird in a cage.

"Mus' take ye pooty much all yer spare time to slick up that way. S'pose, though, ye git yer jacket dusted for ye, if ye don't brush it yerself."

"The sargent be suer to fin' faut wi' us if we're not sightly," replied Randon in his calm, even voice. "I donna wait mysel' for thim to be angered."

"Abeout haow offen does a chap git catter-nine-tailed—on the averich?" enquired Abner.

It seemed to him that he might freely catechise such a queer-talking man, just as he might gabble anything to a parrot or a magpie, which would probably not feel the full force of what was said to it. Indeed, in his anxiety to make Randon understand him, he spoke a little plainer and louder to him than he would have spoken to an American, thereby considerably exaggerating and emphasizing his own provincialities.

"A man who moinds his duty," said Randon, "an' doesna take to the drink, can be a sojer a' his life wi'out bein' catted. By th' grace o' God I 'a' niver had no punishment. Not that I 'd be braggin'; it's just Heaven's mercy."

The pious phrases, and a meek, devout look which came into the man's hollow eyes, aroused Abner's extremest marvel and curiosity. "Haow long you ben in the sarvice?" he asked.

"I 'll 'a' been a sojer three year, comin' Chrismas."

"An' yeou a pious man?" demanded Abner in a tone of wonder approaching to incredulity and denial.

Private Randon did not look discomposed, nor did he hesitate to reply. Without moving a muscle, without altering his cool, monotonous, tranquil voice, he said, "I hoombly trust I 'a' foun' the Saviour."

"Haow 'd that come abeout?" stared Abner, leaving his mouth ajar after the question, as if to receive information by every possible orifice.

Neither did Randon hesitate to answer this query. No doubt he had found that the narration of his devotional experience sometimes moved other men to solemn reflection and a betterment of life. No doubt, too, he felt it to be his duty to confess the faith that was in him, no matter where or by whom such confession might be demanded.

"I 'a' allays been a bit serious," he began; "barrin' onct, when I was beguiled into drink an' listed," he added, shaking his head and sighing. "Yet I 'n no call to complain o' be'en left to that; it was made use of to lead me where I wasna thinkin' to go; it was made use of to save me from mysel'. But it wasna till we war on our passage hither that the Heavenly Feyther spoke to me in an awahkenin' voice. I 'd niver a book to read but a Bible; an' He, in His great mercy, moved me to study it. Day in an' day oot, aloon when I could be, I pondered th' Holy Word. An' whiles I read, our Heavenly Payrent was pleased to enlighten my moind an' draw my heart, such was the sweet power of His grace. Yet still I was much in darkness, and also in great alarm. I desired salvation wi' longin' an' tremblin'; but it seemed like all things were again' me. There was in th' regimint a pious

man, Corp'ral Pierce. I sought him oot, an' we became frens, so great was his condescension an' Christian kindness. He expounded to me th' amazin' love o' God in giving His Son to bleed an' die for fallen men. He unfolded unto me th' need o' holiness o' sperit an' life, an' th' sweet mysteries o' redemption by faith an' th' new birth. To that worthy man, an' t' our Heavenly Feyther's blessed Scripter, I owe aw' th' good that I 'm acquainted wi'. Soon after we landed, Jesus was pleased to speak peace to my troubled soul. Oh, that hour o' bliss! that hour o' wonderful joy! when I first felt that I 'd been washed i' the blood o' th' Lamb! Since then, thanks be to God, I 'a' had an abidin' hope."

His earnest tone, and his serenely solemn eyes, were altogether convincing and touching. It would have been as much out of place to laugh at his confession as to laugh at the sound of a voice from beyond the grave.

But while Abner was considerably interested, he was even more astonished. He gave his head a deeper slant, and made another exhaustive study of Private Randon, scanning him minutely from his shoe-leather up to his disciplined club of hair, as if to make sure that he were an indisputable British soldier, a comrade of those men who had bayoneted the wounded at Lexington, a comrade of drunken, swearing John Higg and Blue Peter.

"*Wal!*!" he said at last, sharply and with strong emphasis. "*I suppose* they 's decent folks *everywheres.*"

"I hope so," replied Randon, in his unvarying, gentle voice.

"Th' may be some in jail," hazarded Abner.

"Tha' war a-many i' th' times o' th' apostles," said Randon.

Abner inspected him once more, and then gave him up for an undecipherable puzzle, tenderly rubbing his own tow scalp with one calloused palm, as if the problem of a pious British soldier made a Yankee's head ache. Nor did the conversation lead him into devotional movements of spirit on his own account. The conversion of a redcoat, of a regularly enlisted and trained lobster, struck him much as would the conversion of a Turk, or a goblin, or a quadruped. While it was wonderfully curious, and even pathetically interesting, it did not appear to invite an American patriot heavenward, but rather the contrary.

Private Randon proved a much gentler drill-master than the Normanno-Milesian Brallaghan. He never swore, never chased anybody with a brandished weapon, never even showed impatience. Yet he was conscientiously painstaking in teaching what he had to teach, the manual of arms and company evolutions. His handling of the musket had an accuracy, a rhythm, and a slap, which stirred the souls of the Regulators, and made them want to march to battle.

"By *gum!*!" Abner used to say to himself, "when I see that man shoulder whoop, I feel fightish; I feel 's though I could whip King Philip, let alone King George."

He meditated a great deal upon Randon, during the pauses of drill exercises. "I *sup-pose* that good creetur would *haf* to shute me, if he was ordered. I *sup-pose* he would take stiddy aim an' pull trigger, if he prayed for me the same minit. An' I dunno 's I'd blame him a mite. It 'ud be his duty, if he was ordered. But ain't it cur'ous 'beout these orders ?

He 'd be ordered to shute me; an' he would n't be ordered to pray for me; an' yet England calls itself a Christian country. I reckon, if Randon was king, he 'd haf such an order publisht. Pray for your man, an' then hit him; that 'ud be Randon's tactics. An' I do *not* believe that, after a chap was fairly down, he 'd mount him with a bagonet. That 's John Higg and Blue Peter; it ain't Randon."

Over and over, with a view to warning his countrymen of danger, he pondered the idea of asking Randon when the British would make their expected sally. Of course it seemed rather mean to take advantage of such a simple-hearted, worthy creature, and mislead him into betraying the counsels of his superiors.

"But ain't *I* got no duty to pufform?" reasoned Abner. "And, as for Randon, if he lets out suthin' without sensin' what 's to come on 't, why, he ain't a speck blamable, and I don't lead him into sin."

So at last he ventured his query, "When is 't the reg'lars are goin' to put out an' fight the rebels?"

For the first time since the two men had become acquainted Abner saw a broad smile on Randon's serious face.

"Tha 's niver no speech o' such matters beforehand," he said. "The first I 'll know of it, 'll be the order to sling knapsacks."

Had any other redcoat made this statement Abner might have suspected him of being deep and sly. But looking askance into Randon's mild face and solemn eyes, he did not doubt his word any more than he would have doubted that of Old Put or of a white-winged angel.

"That so?" he replied, disappointed, and asked no more questions.

CHAPTER XXII

ABNER STUDIES MOORCASTLE

In the course of his involuntary watchings and wanderings in Boston, Abner Sly passed one night on duty at the "store" of Jehiel Oakbridge. He went to his post early, not because it was necessary, but because he was as fond of gossip and refreshments as a modern policeman. Thus he got a hot supper, washed it down with a quart of cider, and learned something about the family.

"Housebreakers been around lately," stated John Oakbridge. "Concluded we'd apply to Squire Ruggles for a guard, though it costs something. We don't keep a clerk now, business is so light; and I got rather worn out sitting up nights with my horse-pistol. Father's away."

"Father's away," echoed Abner, willing to hear more, no matter what, and repeating the last phrase to give John a new start.

"Yes, father's away over sea. Got a contract to bring supplies for the garrison. Father's a leetle Whiggish," chuckled John, who had been drinking madeira and was injudiciously communicative. "That is, he's been Whiggish; did n't quite like to take this job. But he came 'round to it. Folks must live."

"Contracks hard to git?" enquired Abner, forget-

ting that he was a patriot, and wondering whether he could secure one for himself.

"I should say so; takes high influence to get one. Cap'm Moorcastle was *our* friend. Ever seen the Cap'm? One of the big military men here; on the Major-General's retinue,—Gage's retinue. He 's a friend of ours; calls on sister. There he goes now, by George! Yes, he 's bound for the homestead."

He looked out of the window after Moorcastle, watched him enter the yard of the paternal mansion, and nodded with a smile of satisfaction. Abner, studying him closely, comprehended that the Captain was a suitor, and a highly favored one. He immediately became anxious to have Oakbridge clear out.

"Wal," he said with a tone of finality, "guess I can take care of the place. Dunno 's I want any more showin'."

"Jus' so," sighed Oakbridge, somnolently. "Sleep right there, on the counter. Plenty of blankets. Good night, Mr. Sly."

It was one of the warm, delicious nights of the first half of June. Abner decided that, before he entered upon the slumbers which would be the principal part of his guard-duty, he would patrol the premises. It was a flimsy pretence at vigilance, with the sole intent of satisfying his gluttonous curiosity; the only rogue that he looked for was a British officer intent upon stealing the heart of a Yankee maiden.

He found an ambush near one of the open windows of the Oakbridge parlor; and there he breathlessly watched the unsuspecting young couple within, and caught what he could of their conversation—his lean head stretched painfully forward, and his mouth drawn

back at the corners, like a cat watching a pair of cooing robins. It seemed at times (to use his own vigorous dialect) as if he would "meow right out and fetch a jump."

Desultory and not easily comprehensible was the dialogue that he listened to. Huldah asked how Mrs. Gage was; not that she knew the Major-General's august consort, but she never forgot that that fortunate lady was a New Yorker; it was well to remind Moorcastle that his chief had married an American.

Then she prattled of various subjects, skipping swiftly from one to another, laughing frequently, and in short doing her little best to be entertaining. Meanwhile there was a continuous gentle struggle, which rustic Abner Sly looked upon as a humorous show of coyness, but which was in reality pitiful. The love-lorn Huldah (a provincial and a puritan, remember) was using every girlish art to evade the audacious advances of her British gallant without angering him. If, for instance, he reached forth to seize her hand, she swiftly raised it to arrange her flossy hair, or she drew it back with a nervous giggle.

"Oh no, Captain Moorcastle!" she pleaded. "You held it the other evening. What does it amount to? You did n't care."

Then she had to wrestle with her feelings to keep her mouth from quivering. Oh, how she longed to give him that hand, then and forever! But Sister Ann (with whom she daily consulted) had warned her to be careful; she must not allow Captain Moorcastle too many favors and freedoms; it was no way to catch the likes of *him*.

Moorcastle quietly dropped back from his attempt

at entering upon manual possession. He was not going to be beguiled into assuring her that holding her hand *should* amount to something. His silence and his air of indifference cut her to the heart; and ere long she let him take the contested hand without a pout of objection.

"There! you've got it," she said, trying to giggle. And then, mustering all her courage, she added, "Now, what do you want to do with it?"

He made no reply, and she continued, "You don't want it. Fling it back to me!"

Moorcastle shook his head, and laughed noiselessly. His long front teeth were visible to Abner, who thought that he looked "mighty wolfish." He said something, but it was in an indistinct bass, husky and stifled as though with emotion. Then Huldah's treble notes, unintentionally clear and audible, responded with a kind of plaintive petulance, "Oh no! . . . I don't like. . . . Please don't ask me."

There were more hollow murmurs, and more soprano responses, the latter alone being audible to Abner, so that what he heard consisted of such broken phrases as these: "No, I dast n't go. . . . Mother don't want me to. . . . I may see you here, but not run about o' nights. . . . Please don't talk to me so. . . . You think because I'm nothing but an American girl——"

Here she suddenly snatched away her hand, and shoved back her chair violently.

"By gum! ain't she spunky!" softly chuckled Abner, much better satisfied with his little country-woman than she was with herself, and beginning to feel an entirely mistaken compassion for Moorcastle.

A minute later, greatly to his surprise and gratification, he saw that they were side by side again, the girl's voice gay and her eyes sparkling. Presently they rose together, and stood in an attitude of listening; then they went softly out of the room and left the house by the front door.

"Takin' a walk," grinned Abner. "Don't see why not. Me an' Keziah useter."

The drama had interested him tenderly, and he resolved not to go to bed till he had seen it out. He made a tour of the store and returned to his ambush; after a time he made a second tour and returned in great haste. But it was half an hour or so before the couple stealthily re-entered the parlor. The candle was still burning, and Abner could see that Huldah's face was not joyous now, but downcast and petulant. A more spiritual beholder would have divined that some manly promise had been broken and some womanly expectation disappointed. But Abner was immediately absorbed in awaiting the result of a dialogue only half of which was audible to him, though the entire purport could be comprehended. The man was determined not to leave without a good-bye kiss.

"Oh — Captain Moorcastle — I ca-n't," pleaded Huldah. She looked so honestly averse, so pitifully shamefaced, that Abner wondered at her, remembering how easily Keziah had accorded her caresses.

In reply Moorcastle spoke loud enough to be heard distinctly by the outside listener. "I shall think you are angry with me," he said. "I shall think that we are no longer friends."

Then the girl stood still, and shrinkingly received a kiss, cringing and recoiling under his grasp as though

he hurt her. But when she tore herself loose, and, springing back a few feet, stood gazing at him, her face was flushed and her eyes glittered.

"There, go!—bad man!" she laughed, daring to assume a little domination, as women do when they have accorded much. "Now go—and be sorry."

"By gum! that's a nice gal," muttered Abner with a broad grin of admiration. "Never seen no such modest gal as that afore. She'll make him a firs'-rate wife. Guess he'll git her, too, if he hangs on."

What a pathetic difference there was between his understanding of the case and the real, anxious, conscience-smitten fact of it! When Moorcastle had departed, Huldah seized the candle in petulant haste, fastened the front door with the furtive movements of a thief, pulled off her shoes, and stole upstairs in her stockings. Once in her room, she softly bolted herself in, and sat down on the edge of her bed, weary and sorrowful.

When and how would this struggle end? How much longer could she bear it without falling ill and dying? It was one continual fight with everybody who loved her, or whose good opinion and love she coveted. Even Sister Ann lectured her at times on the necessity of being more prudent. But that was nothing compared with the fact that her mother fretted at her, and about her, and, what was worse, prayed for her.

"If she only would n't do that!" sighed Huldah.
"But, oh! what if she should stop?"

Here she began to cry, resting her elbows on her knees, supporting her forehead on her hands, and letting the tears drop, drop, drop on the floor.

But at last her head was on the pillow, and from that tear-stained pillow went up a prayer for Moorcastle, and in answer to it a pitying angel brought slumber.

It would have taken something mightier than Huldah's prayers to soften and hallow the noble Captain. His idea of compassion and righteousness was that they were obstacles to a gentleman in pursuit of pleasure. His idea of Huldah was that she was selfish; that she had no sweet willingness to sacrifice her happiness to his entertainment; that she was disappointingly selfish and provokingly stubborn about it. Of course he saw through her: she was planning to make a grand marriage; very likely talked it over daily with her mother; got advice from her as to how to keep him at cold-blooded arm's length; girls were always gabbing to some old woman, confound them!

But such an alliance was so utterly out of the question that she ought to be ashamed to think of it. Besides, she had *had* something; she had had his high-bred company and attentions; and he had secured a contract for her father. The girl was a nice, pretty, attractive little thing; but she was unreasonable, exacting, ungrateful, and selfish. The young man thought himself abused, and, hard as he was, he began to feel grieved. Then of a sudden he threw out his chest and laughed angrily. "Come, Moorcastle! don't be a baby!"

Once a suggestion of pity startled him. Was he not causing serious suffering, was he not hunting a fellow-creature near to spiritual disaster, merely to gratify his vanity? But he promptly and resolutely cast out this messenger from heaven. Pshaw! of course he was

hunting the girl; but women were made, by Jove! for men to hunt them; nor did it hurt them so much as poets and novelists pretended; they soon got used to the hurt, and finally got proud of it. Gentlemen always had and always would amuse themselves with common-born girls; and the girls did not want them to stop it, and liked them all the better for it, as they ought to.

The most hopeless point about Moorcastle was his solid confidence that he was a fine fellow and a man of unspotted honor. He was almost entirely incapable, at least in regard to gallantry, of self-reproach and remorse. The probability is that there were truer, purer, more scrupulous, more merciful spirits than he in almost any jail. Yet he sincerely believed that he had never committed a dishonorable act, and could not commit one; and he held himself ready to take the life of any man who should hint to him that he was not a model gentleman.

Just after quitting Huldah he had vented some of his bitterness upon Abner Sly, whom he discovered behind the shelter of a lilac thicket, extremely anxious not to be investigated.

"What are you about there?" he demanded, in his military growl. "Step forward here!"

Abner was not a little scared at the prospect of being cross-questioned by one of Gage's staff. But he had learned obedience to officers, and he tramped mechanically up to Moorcastle, saluting as well as he knew how.

"What the devil are you?" said the Captain. Then, divining that here was one of the Regulators, "What the devil are you doing here?"

"I'm on command to guard this store," whined Abner.

Moorcastle gave him an inspecting stare, grinned at the poor imitation of a regular's position and air, and silently strode on toward his lodgings.

"What have I done *now*?" snarled Abner to himself, with the bridled ferocity of a show leopard who would use his claws if he were not afraid of the whip and the hot iron. "S'pose I'm to be reported for suthin'. Hope it won't be thirty lashes."

Indignant at having been frightened, he steadily watched the retreating form of the young officer, as if he were taking aim at him from the ambush of the lilac thicket.

"I could plug him," he muttered through his clenched teeth. "I could bore him through the head, or erry one of his ears, if I on'y dast. Darn his growlin' picter! He must be a pooty hash creetur, anyway. I did n't useter snap 'round like that when I'd been settin' up with a nice gal. I useter feel good-hearted, an' wanted to love everybody. Darned if I don't hope the gal will give him the mitten!"

Then, fearful lest the Captain should happen back, he slunk into the store and went to bed. But in vain did Oakbridge's soft-pine counter and first-class blankets invite him to slumber. Huldah had put him in mind of his youth, his courting days, his wife, and his home. Moorcastle had put him in mind of General Gage, John Higg, Blue Peter, the cat-o'-nine-tails, the gallows. Here he was, an enlisted American soldier, inside of a British garrison and in disguise. If he were detected, would he be hung as a rebel or hung as a spy?

" It would n't make much difference which," sighed Abner. " Too bad to be hung! and I only turned twenty-five!"

What with his homesickness, and his alarms, and his insomnia, he became babyish. He whimpered for himself, and even made a bungling attempt to pray for himself, recalling imperfectly by turns the simple petitions which he had learned in childhood, and mixing them with the pious phrases which he had heard " in meeting." Like poor little Huldah—so near by, and so unconscious of him—he prayed and bewailed himself to sleep.

Some of my readers may take it for granted that Abner was a poltroon. No more of a poltroon, most valiant cavaliers, than is a Bengal tiger. When the chances favored him, he was as deadly as a tiger, he was a most expert and dangerous antagonist, a match for thrice his weight in unwary foemen. But when the chances seemed against him, he could cringe, and lurk, and skulk like the striped terror of the jungle. No, he was not a poltroon; he was a simple child of nature; he was a two-legged " big cat." Or we might describe him more scientifically as a semi-puritanic *homo pitheicus*, with something of farcical Jacko left in him, and something of the gorilla.

After breakfast next morning, with a hearty meal and a quart of cider in his stomach, he remembered with shame the doldrums of the night, and resolved that he would not leave Boston until he could carry to Cambridge some information as to the date and direction of the projected British sortie.

CHAPTER XXIII

ABNER'S FLIGHT

ABNER finally dared apply for information concerning Gage's plans to his own officer, the commandant of the Town Guard.

Timothy Ruggles, a man of social eminence and oratorical ability, was a disappointed politician who had seen himself surpassed in popular esteem by Otis and Warren, and had consequently doubled back into extreme loyalism, toiling fervently to organize Tory victory at the hustings, and, when that failed, beating the drum for war. He was high in favor with Gage; it is related that he was consulted by the military council which preceded the battle of Bunker Hill; and it is certain that he subsequently rose to be some kind of a Tory general, chiefly eminent in the recruiting line.

At this time he was endeavoring to raise a battalion, with a view to obtaining a royal commission as colonel. Abner Sly had the common-born conceit and impudence to believe that he could make a tool of this cunning egoist. He approached him with an elaborately servile show of reverence which gave Ruggles a longing to kick him.

"Cap-ting," he whined, "I'd like to 'list in that rigiment that your honor is a-startin'. Only I don't

want to 'list for service in Boston. What I want is to git a sure chance to git outside an' git a fight."

Ruggles did not believe this. He did not believe that any man really desired to go into battle, barring a trained British soldier, or at least an Englishman. He felt humorously sure that Abner would run away as soon as he came under fire, unless there should be an officer or a sergeant at hand to punch him forward on the path to glory. This grinning, wheedling, low-born whelp was evidently aiming at something to his own advantage. But Ruggles did not care about that; here was a recruit, and he would bag him.

He responded precisely as a politician of our corrupted era would respond to a "son of toil" whose vote he might be after. He drew all over his face a veil of sham benignity, excepting that he did not and could not hide the selfish cunning of his eyes, a cunning curiously mingled with ironical buffoonery.

"Certainly, Abner," he smirked. "That's what we all want; that's what I want: fix bayonets and go at 'em! Put your name on my roll, and you shall have a fight in three days."

"Yis,—but *where?* Hog Island? That's what I'm fiercest after."

Ruggles now divined what the man was aiming at—he simply wanted to get back to his farm. Well, who could blame him?

"Hog Island in time, Abner," he said, playing with his petitioner after the superior manner of leading politicians. "To advance upon Hog Island with safety, General Gage must have Charlestown and Bunker Hill. So we shall secure those points first."

He was laughing all the while in his ruffled sleeve,

and his statement was just the contrary of what he believed. Nearly all the Tories in Boston supposed that, when the king's troops got ready for action, they would boldly and majestically march out over Boston Neck, and disperse those wretched rebels at Roxbury and Cambridge with one charge of the British bayonet.

Abner Sly accepted Mr. Ruggles' fable. "Oh, poke after it Charlestown way?" he said with a wink. "When 's it gunter be?"

"Inside of three days," asserted the able politician. "So you 'd best hurry up, my man. The battalion is about as full as it can hold."

"Scratch me down, Capting," said Abner. "I s'pose anyway it 's worth a mug of cider."

He got the cider, though it was becoming scarce in Boston. But before he could be regularly enrolled into the "Loyal Americans" an extraordinary adventure befell him. During the evening he went on guard over certain properties (the hodge-podge luggage of some newly arrived Tory refugees) which had been left on the wharf of the Charlestown ferry. Of course he had his scarlet coat, his musket, and other military accoutrements. Barring that he wore stockings instead of gaiters, a fact not at once obvious by starlight, he bore the semblance of a British soldier, though scarcely a credit to the service.

But he was far from being contented and happy in his lobster uniform. The proximity of Bunker Hill, where a Yankee picket nestled, and the thought of that wife, and house, and farm, not many miles beyond, made him desperately homesick. Seating himself on the dewy cover of a baldish hair-trunk, he stared at the dimly visible landscape on the other side

of the Charles River, and pondered a dozen impracticable plans for reaching it. The gloom of nostalgia was in his eyes when he heard a disciplined tramp approaching, and presently beheld a platoon of regulars march past him to the end of the wharf.

Abner the inquisitive arose and drew nigh to the rear of the little column. There were two officers, as he could squintingly make out, and about two dozen of light infantrymen. No one spoke, but he heard near by a plashing of oars, and he comprehended that boats were being brought up to the landing-stair. He had just decided that there were not men enough there to seize Bunker Hill, and that he might as well return to his doleful reverie on the hair-trunk, when one of the officers came to the rear of the platoon and said in a hoarse growl, "What are you lagging back for? Form up!"

Some befriending angel, perhaps a rebel angel, gave Abner the courage to hold his tongue and obey the order. A little later, he and all the others were seated in two launches, heading up the river and making for the northern shore at the foot of Town Hill. Abner kept silence, rested his face between the two tremulous hands which clenched his upright musket, and wondered if anybody heard the beating of his heart. The soldiers on his right and left glanced at him, but they said nothing to him nor to each other. A veteran who is thoroughly caned into his duty generally does no more than the exact duty which he is caned into. If these redcoats noted that Abner was a Yankee, they probably concluded that he had been brought along as a guide, and that at all events it was none of their enlisted business.

About midnight the party landed below Town Hill. The straggling western end of Charlestown was dark and fast asleep. Clouds were drifting across the sky and the faint light of the stars was failing as the platoon threaded the straggling suburb in silence and came to a halt in the open fields beyond.

"Begad!" muttered one of the officers, "we 'll have a doosid bungling job of it to-night."

"It 's to-night or never, perhaps," said the other.
"Not much time between now and the eighteenth."

Abner hearkened till it seemed to him that his ears grew and projected out of his head a foot long, but without being able to catch another word.

Now came the ordinary advance of a reconnoissance. The left section of the platoon deployed as skirmishers and pushed forward under charge of one of the officers, while the right section, headed by the other officer, followed at some distance in close order as a reserve. Abner of course could not divine whether the intention was to attack the picket on Bunker Hill, or merely to spy out its position and numbers. He did not think of that question at all; he did not and could not care if the whole picket were shot and bayoneted; his troubled soul was concentrated on the problem of finding a chance to run away; in short, he felt as nineteen out of twenty brave men would have felt in his situation. I say *brave* intentionally and firmly, for although Abner could be scared now and then, and although he had a scalp-hunter's ideas as to the best way of fighting, he was fully up to the average of untrained human valor.

Luckily for him, his position in the platoon had thrown him into the skirmish-line and on the extreme

left of it. This fact favored his project of flight; all he needed now was some kind of cover. Meanwhile he advanced with the line, diverging cautiously to the left, and treading with the stealthiness of an Iroquois scout, for he remembered that there was danger of catching a Yankee ball as well as a British one. Presently he discerned a glimmer ahead, and knew that it was the watch-fire of the picket, and pictured to himself the militiamen warming their rations over it, or lighting their corn-cob pipes.

"Dang 'em!" he thought with something like anger. "If they 'll only keep still till I get there!"

At last he reached a long, shadowy something which proved to be a stretch of bushes. Now was his chance; now or never. He slipped behind the alders, stooped low, and set off on a run, aiming at the glimmer on the hilltop. He was in a panting fright, expecting every moment to get a loyal bullet in his back, or a patriotic one in his breast. But he ran on with all his might, dashed by the straggling upper end of the thicket, and came out on the rounded brow of Bunker Hill, where he stumbled over a sleeping sentry, who woke up in a stuttering panic and bawled for quarter.

"You darned fool, you!" gasped the breathless Abner. "Holler like thunder for the corporal."

The sentinel shouted something, it was impossible to say what, for in his terror his voice had broken and he gave forth a commingled clamor, part bass and part falsetto. One would have thought that a very hoarse man and a very shrill-toned woman were calling alternately for assistance. But the uproar answered a purpose, for half a dozen militiamen came running up, discharging their firelocks one after the other into the

darkness, and immediately swaying back upon the main body.

To this loose gunning a volley responded; then there was a long-drawn order, far away; then silence. The picket meantime was in wild excitement, some of the men struggling into their equipments, others vociferating for a charge, and the lieutenant in command screaming, "Form up!" It was just such a helpless hurly-burly as usually takes place in a detachment of undisciplined troops disturbed by a night attack.

The English did not advance as a body, though they probably sent forward a lurking scout or two to creep about the picket and spy out its numbers. The Americans got into line, and the lieutenant ceased his yelling. Then it was discovered that one man, ten or fifteen yards to the rear of the line, was lying prone with a bloody hole in one temple.

"I swo! Kiah's got it!" exclaimed a comrade. "I told Kiah to keep away from the rear. The Good Book says the devil allays takes the hindmost."

The lieutenant, a small, nervous, light-haired man, stared at the comrade as though he proposed to dispute the accuracy of that text. But his attention was immediately attracted by the proceedings of Abner Sly, who had already thrown off his scarlet coat and was engaged in appropriating that of his slain countryman.

"Say, you!" exclaimed the lieutenant. "Are you a deserter?"

"I'm on General Ward's retinue," Abner explained. "Got monstrous big tidings for him."

And away he ran, hindered by nobody, though one man grumbled, "What business had he with Kiah's coat?"

As he approached the American reserve on the Neck, he remembered that he ought to have provided himself with the countersign. But it did not matter; he told the sentry that he belonged to the picket, forgetting in his haste that it was a fib; and the sentry told him to scamper along and hurry back. Between the Neck and Cambridge he met Captain Asahel Farnlee riding one of his grand rounds; and, forgetting in his joy the discipline that he had learned in the past six weeks, he shouted at him, "Hullo!"

"What! Abner!" returned Ash. "We thought you were shot. How did you get away?"

"Too long a story to tell now, Capting. I've got some mighty pressing tidings for Ginral Ward."

"Go on to headquarters," said Ash. "I'll be there soon and help you get at the General. How did you come by the guards?"

"Cost me some trouble to wake 'em up," scoffed Abner. "Better send Brallaghan up there to give 'em ginral trainin'."

Ash rode off in a fury to Bunker Hill, and Abner panted on afoot to Cambridge, where he found listeners of high rank for his tale. He found believers, too, for other refugees had, within a few hours, slipped out of Boston, and the American chiefs were already querying whether a British sortie was at hand.

The result was: first, that on the 15th of June, 1775, the Committee of Safety (which was a committee of the Massachusetts Legislature) recommended to the Council of War at Cambridge that Bunker Hill should be occupied in force; and, second, that, in the evening of the same day, Ward and his generals met to take action upon the recommendation of the Committee.

The Council must have found it a scaring matter to resolve upon a movement which might bring on a battle. The sixteen thousand soldiers in camp had few bayonets and not above five rounds apiece of ammunition. In magazine, there were sixty-three half-barrels of powder, a few hundred bullets, and a small store of lead. The heavy cannon were about a score in number, and the field-artillery consisted of eight four-gun batteries, very nearly destitute of balls and cartridges. The entrenchments were, as yet, mere scattered breastworks except in front of Boston Neck. What fighting chance was there against Gage, with his veteran regulars, his filled cartridge-boxes, his bayonets, his overflowing magazines, his abundant cannon, and his ships of war?

Yet the Council decided to seize Bunker Hill, trusting that, if a battle ensued, it would quicken recruiting in New England, arouse the sympathy and pugnacity of the distant colonies, and consolidate American resistance to "taxation without representation."

During the early evening of the next day, the American engineer officer, Colonel Gridley, with Generals Warren and Putnam, made a reconnoissance of the Charlestown promontory and held a hot argument as to the proper site for a redoubt.

Warren, a Massachusetts major-general now, and therefore the ranking officer of the trio, was urgent for Breed's Hill.

"We cannot hold it," replied the old engineer. "Gage's cannons command it. We must fortify Bunker Hill, in order to support our advance, and also to cover our retreat, if that should happen."

"Colonel Gridley is right," declared Putnam. "Our

men are too poorly disciplined, and too poorly furnished with arms and munitions, to take and keep so exposed a position. I know the British soldiers; they are well provided, well trained, obedient, and persevering; their stubbornness will outlast our supply of powder and lead. We are not yet in condition to challenge a battle with old regulars, and skilled batteries, and a strong fleet."

But Warren, young and eager for distinction, wise in politics and ignorant of war, argued for the advanced post "with pressing importunity," and secured an unwilling acquiescence.

"Let it be Breed's Hill, then," grumbled the others, and thereupon the three ambled back to Cambridge to announce their decision, still querying whether that decision was wise or senseless.

During that same night, between midnight and dawn, a thousand New Englanders (eight hundred from Massachusetts and two hundred from Connecticut) threw up on Breed's Hill a feeble redoubt, less than fifty-five yards square, by way of challenging England to battle.

When morning came over the Atlantic, and the jaded Americans could see where they were and what encompassed them, they were tempted to abandon their seemingly mad enterprise, and disperse.

"Eight ships of war and all Boston armed against us!" muttered Peter Brown, clerk of a company in Prescott's regiment. "I do venture to say, there has been oversight, or presumption, or treachery, in our officers."

There was a general cringing among these raw soldiers when the brig *Lively*, twenty guns, followed by

the *Falcon*, eighteen guns, opened their astonished ports and began to thunder against the southern curtain of the redoubt.

To reassure his people, Prescott mounted the rampart and paced its entire circuit, his cheering voice audible through the *pum, pum* of the cannonade, and his white linen frock distinctly visible to the English on Copp's Hill. It was at this time that his brother-in-law, Willard, recognized his commanding figure, and with a spasm of pride in his Tory throat, said to General Gage, "He will fight to the last drop of his blood."

Meantime, there were a few among Prescott's followers who did not like his heroism, and who would have been pleased to see him run away, because then they could run also without plainly disgracing themselves. Among these secretly troubled souls was Abner Sly, who had accompanied the detachment to the peninsula as a guide, much elated with the honor of bearing a dark lantern for Colonel Prescott. As a veteran of Lexington, Abner had a reputation to support, and, therefore, he had resolved to see the battle through and set a glorious example.

But the cannonade was much harder on his nerves than had been the wild shooting around Smith's and Percy's breathless retreat. He distinctly felt that, if he could not re-enforce his valor, he was in danger of "scrooching." There was a comrade near at hand whose gaping haversack revealed the neck of a stone bottle. After glancing at it wistfully a dozen times, Abner laid hold of it with a bony, dirty claw, drawling out, "I've been a-lookin' at it for a spell, an' neow I b'lieve I'll ketch holt."

" Haow ? " grinned the fellow-patriot. " Been waitin' for me to ask ye ? "

For sole answer, Abner raised the bottle, threw back his tow head, and took a long pull, the Adam's apple in his scrawny throat working spasmodically.

" Haow long 's this squawmishness goin' to last ? " genially enquired the other.

Abner wiped his mouth with his knuckles and replied, " Till I git dry agin."

It was cheering to find that he could joke under the cannonade, and he began to hope that he should survive the battle and win it.

CHAPTER XXIV

BUNKER HILL

A SH FARNLEE'S service in the battle did not begin so early as Abner Sly's. It was about noon when he received permission from General Ward to accompany Old Put to Bunker Hill.

The two officers set off in a canter for the Causeway, which was then the most direct road between Cambridge and Charlestown. Putnam, his broad face red and worried, rode for some time in silence, leaning well forward in his saddle and working his elbows as if to help his nag onward.

"I have two duties to-day, Captain," he finally said. "One is, to feed the fore line with re-enforcements; the other is, to establish a second line behind Prescott and Stark. But, so far, I can't do either. We are a rabble of well-meaning fellows, commanded by God knows who. Massachusetts men would sooner obey a British brigadier than a Connecticut one. When we get a Union, then we can have an army. Warren is the ranking officer on the Neck, and ought to take command. He knows nothing about it, but he might ask me or Stark what to do, and give his orders according. As things are now, with nobody at the head, we shall fight a piecemeal battle. Prescott will hold the redoubt and breastwork on Breed's Hill.

Stark and Reed will take care of the hay-fence butting on Mystic River. Knowlton and my men will connect Prescott with the Hampshire fellows. There is our plan of battle, Captain, supposing I should get killed and you should want to know what to tell the folks. As for the British, they have got twenty-five hundred men on the end of the Neck, and mean to attack us fair and square on our front, which is the kindest thing they could do for us. Why in Nipton's name they did n't come on two hours ago, before Knowlton and Stark got their fence built, is more than I can explain. They might have had the whole Neck then, without losing three hundred men,—perhaps not a hundred."

While Putnam thus talked, the two horsemen entered upon the long and narrow Causeway, and became aware of battle and peril. The English had already opened that wide-spreading cannonade of two hours or more which preluded the attack of their infantry. There was a greater uproar of artillery than usually ushers in a struggle between armies of twenty or thirty thousand men. Several scores of iron or brazen muzzles perseveringly hurled balls and grape from end to end and from side to side of the little peninsula, only about a mile long and half a mile broad.

On the Roxbury front, too, there was a clamorous bow-wow-ing, by way of threatening a sally upon the American right wing, and so distracting the attention of the inexperienced commander at Cambridge.

The battery at Barton's Point and an armed transport moored high up in the Charles River bore full on the Causeway, and on the isthmus beyond it, and were very useful that day in checking the arrival of American re-enforcements. Fourteen heavy guns were

pitching round shot, bar-shot, and chain-shot across the track of our two horsemen.

Ash was not scared, though he was conscious of a solemnizing anxiety; he had all his wits at command and observed everything intelligently. Several times he glanced sidelong at his grizzled companion, curious to see how a veteran bore himself in such deadly circumstances.

Old Put had on his habitual Vespasianic smile, broadened and hardened just now to a stony grin. He did not look after the screeching balls, nor at the ragged trenches which they tore up in the road, nor at the hostile batteries which were smoking down the Charles River. His wide-open blue eyes were set straight forward in the direction of Breed's Hill, as if his overruling thought were a fear lest he should discern Prescott's men running out of the redoubt. The anxiety of the General was profound and strong enough to drown the anxiety of the child of mortality.

Nearing the eastern end of the Causeway, Farnlee's horse was killed by a cannon-shot, and fell headlong with his rider. Putnam gave the youngster a glance, as if to see whether he were dead, and then, without speaking, without making a show of halting, cantered on toward the battle-field. Ash got up, rubbed his bruised hands hastily, and, leaving his horse as unceremoniously as Putnam had left him, hastened forward afoot. Nearing Bunker Hill, he found a dead provincial, a respectable fellow-townsman, and stripped him of his gun and ammunition just as hard-heartedly as if he were a pirate. Then he hustled on, hot, red in the face, and dripping with sweat, to Prescott's position on Breed's Hill.

The redoubt swarmed with men, some finishing the banquettes, some watching the British array in front, some asleep. Ash saw Warren kneeling on the ground in his fine clothes, and bandaging a soldier's bloody arm. Then he met Prescott, who sent him to the outer end of an unfinished exterior breastwork, as being a spot which needed specially capable defenders.

From this point he had a view of the field of prospective battle. Even to his inexperienced eyes, the American position seemed a singular one and very faulty. On the right was the redoubt, its front towards Boston, and its narrow eastern flank, only forty-four yards long, facing Howe's twenty-five hundred men. Joining it on the north came about the same length of breastwork, and, below that, a stretch of side hill protected merely by a shallow marsh. The hay-fence, which Ash thought should have been on a line with the breastwork, lay two or three hundred yards to the rear of it, so that the whole front formed what soldiers call an *echelon*.

Apparently there was nothing to prevent skirmishers and field-pieces from taking post near the marsh and enfilading the breastwork. Obviously and certainly there was nothing to hinder an English gunboat from sailing up the Mystic and enfilading the hay-fence. Ash glanced at these chances with a scowl, and then tried to think of them no more.

In front there was such a noble spectacle as he had never before looked upon. Howe's re-enforcements had now arrived and taken up their positions. A long line of scarlet and of glittering steel stretched from south to north across the peninsula. Near Charlestown stood the Forty-Seventh and the First battalion of marines.

Facing the eastern flank of the redoubt and the front of the breastwork were four regiments in line. Next, farther north, came ten companies of grenadiers in column; then eleven companies of light infantry, also in column. Six field-pieces, banging away at the hay-fence, were between the light infantry and the grenadiers.

It was a beautiful, an imposing, a terrible pageantry. Many of the provincials were so fascinated by it that they scarcely noticed the cannonade, which was still roaring with undiminished fury, piling columns of smoke above the harbor and the two peninsulas. If a man dropped now, they did not trouble themselves to carry the body out of the way, nor so much as think of having prayers said over it.

By no means all of them were gazing at the English; there were some who took one glance, and then looked no more. One such, a beardless, cherry-cheeked boy, murmured to a swarthy, iron-gray man who sat near him, "Daddy, you tell me when they are coming." The father, a mild-eyed and kindly-faced soul, surely gifted with parental affection, made no reply and seemed not to hear. Hardly a person had an air of caring for another for more than a single instant. Probably there is no self-concentration (for one cannot justly call it egoism) more tense than that of the battle-field.

It must not be supposed that these solemnized men were not brave. They were much above the average of human bravery. Hours on hours of fatigue, of harassing suspense, and of exposure to peril, had eliminated all the weaker spirits. Only the heroes remained; there could be no doubt of it. So shadowy was the

discipline of this army, and so inexperienced and deficient in influence were its officers, that the timorous had been quite free to depart, and had departed.

Ash Farnlee, to his great surprise and still greater vexation, felt more worry and anxiety than he had known in his first combat. The forms of the slain at Lexington rose before him, demanding, "Wilt thou also be as one of us?" Moreover, the cannonade had been very wearing to his nerves; for though he had seen few men fall, those few had been killed by hideous lacerations, sickening to look upon; and then the mere uproar of so many guns, the howling and crashing of so many shot and shell, had shaken both body and soul.

Farnlee was roused from his solemn abstraction by the voice of Colonel Prescott.

The veteran had come forth from the redoubt to see if his men at the breastwork were prepared for the onset; and, striding along the rear of the line, he uttered in a long-drawn, harsh cry a series of practical instructions, repeated over and over. Few of the soldiers looked around at him, and even they instantly turned to stare at the enemy. But the officers, one after another, caught up and reiterated the words, shouting into those half-deafened ears and half-stunned spirits, "Fifteen rods, boys—when they rise that highest knoll—no firing till then, boys—no firing till you hear the word—pick out your man and hit him—don't waste a grain of powder."

Slowly the provincials awoke from their stupor. They picked their flints, renewed their primings, surveyed the slope in front of them, took aim at point it, and recovered their pieces. Some of them cou

over their pound or so of bullets as a miser counts his gold. Those who could show seventeen were grumbled at by those who had but fifteen. Others were objects of envy because they had laid in a store of slugs, such as nails, crumbs of cast-iron, and whittlings of lead pipe. It was clear that these men were going to stand by each other and their own honor.

"It 's a-gonter be rough ploughin'," confided Abner Sly to a comrade. "But I should be dredful 'shamed to turn my back on the boys."

Then arose a murmur, "Here they come!" Once more every eye was turned toward the British line. The cherry-cheeked boy got up, pushed his ragged buff cap back from his flaxen forelock, and took post beside his father, saying in his girlish voice, "Daddy, tell me when."

The father bent down and muttered, "When they rise that nighest hummock. Have you said your prayers, Johnny?"

The child looked up gravely and nodded; then he added, "But, daddy, I want *you* to tell me when."

On the other side, down among the scarlet battalions, pious John Randon was praying also, and perchance many another. It is even not beyond belief that drunken Blue Peter, with his three hundred scars on his back, and as many more on his conscience, was sending aloft some vague plea to be spared yet another time.

Nowhere else is there such a contrast between the outer man and the inner as on the battle-field. Every figure of that disciplined array set forward with equal step at the word of command; there was hardly a shoulder behind the general line of shoulders; there

was not a skulker nor a lingerer. A superficial observer would have supposed that all these wonderful soldiers were utterly and alike fearless of death.

Yet many among them would have been glad to imitate the example of those provincials who had lurked away from the redoubt to the sheltered western slope of Bunker Hill. "Nothing could exceed," wrote a British naval officer who was present, "the panic and apparent dislike of most of the king's troops to enter into this engagement. Even at the landing five actually took to their heels to join the Americans, but were brought back, and two of them hung *in terrorem* for the rest."

But now, once the line of battle formed, discipline had recovered its almost superhuman potency. The habit of obedience moved every man as if he were an automaton. The officer with his drawn rapier followed, and behind him that awful spectre, the Regulations. It was surer death to run away than to advance. And so all of them, the unwilling and the zealous, the cowardly and the brave, the Blue Peters and the John Randons, came on with the same stride and much the same countenance.

The advance was more like a parade than anything that one now sees in battle. The step was ordinary marching-time, but slower than our modern quick-time. Every fifty or sixty yards the battalions halted and rectified the alignment. Sir William Howe had decided that the movement must be regular; and to make it in line, with regularity, it must of course be deliberate. Moreover, the men were loaded with arms, knapsacks, and rations to the amount of one hundred and twenty-five pounds, as British writers

there present inform us, though one finds it hard to believe. The grass, too, was knee-high, and there were fences to climb or to throw down, and the sunshine of middle June was venomously fierce.

Immediately on the English advance the ships and batteries ceased firing. Probably every one of the fourteen hundred novices in the American line drew a deep breath of relief when he observed that that uproar of four hours had come to an end. If there were merely men to fight, and not also tons on tons of flying iron, the wrestle would not be so hard.

Then came another relief, at least to Prescott's people. The regiments which faced the breastwork, and the eastern and southern fronts of the redoubt, halted at the base of the slope and commenced firing. Flight after flight of bullets smote the earthen rampart, or whistled over it to patter among Putnam's reserve on Bunker Hill. The Americans squatted, stared at each other in wonder, and tranquilly awaited orders.

"It 's a feint attack," said an elderly lieutenant who had served in the French war. "They want to amuse us while they storm the rail fence."

He pointed toward the flat between Breed's Hill and Mystic River. Apparently Howe had held fast to his original plan of turning the earthworks and gaining their rear. The whole English right wing was advancing, the battery and part of the grenadiers against Knowlton, the remaining grenadiers and the light infantry against Stark and Reed. Would those two masses wheel to the left and rush into the gap between Knowlton and the breastwork? No; they tramped straight onward; they passed the line of Breed's Hill; they were quite in rear of it. Only the guns, on reach-

ing the soft ground near the morass, went into battery there and opened fire.

Then came a showy tactical manœuvre. The double column of grenadiers opened right and left like a huge machine and "displayed" into line with beautiful precision; while, beyond it, the double column of light infantry broke into column of companies inclining diagonally to the right, and so gradually gaining the shore of the Mystic. Then the whole force of eight or nine hundred men swept forward at the marching step and without firing. The extreme left flank was within musket-shot of the breastwork on the hill, but not a grenadier turned his head in his leather stock to look at it.

Ash glanced back now at the hay-fence. His first impression was that nearly all the Hampshire and Connecticut people must have run away, for only a few scattered heads were visible over the flimsy pretence of an entrenchment. At two hundred yards, or more, it was impossible for him to distinguish the many brown muzzles which were sticking through holes made in the grass padding. Seven or eight hundred good marksmen were kneeling or lying there, waiting for the English to reach what Stark called "the dead-line."

They were fairly ready for the battle. Stark and Reed had doubled and wadded their section of the fence, and thrown up a rough stone wall from the northern end of it down to the river. Finally there had been a murmuring of instructions along the ranks: "Ten rods, boys—not a shot till then—wait for the word," etc.

At last, when the foremost grenadiers and light infantry were within fifty or sixty yards of the fence, the

deadly order, "Fire!" rang forth in a prolonged yell. Then ensued such a slaughter as the oldest English officers present had never seen, not even at Fontenoy or Minden. Gaps opened in the array of grenadiers which Abercrombie could not close, nor Howe. The leading company of light infantry was nearly exterminated, and then the next, and every one that successively took the van.

"A continued sheet of fire," wrote a British officer, "poured from the rebel lines."

"Our light infantry," wrote another, "was served up in companies against the fence without being able to penetrate. Indeed, how could we penetrate when whatever company presented itself lost three fourths, or perhaps nine tenths, of its men?"

The sickening ravage soon wrought confusion and dismay. The men dropped so fast that it was impossible to re-form the broken ranks and secure that shoulder-to-shoulder cohesion upon which regulars in those days so largely depended for victory. In vain did Howe spring to the front of his grenadiers and shout, "I ask no man to go farther than I will myself." In vain did Abercrombie and other gallant officers exhort, plead, push, and in every way strive to force a charge. Retreating men, whom they caught by the arm or collar, fell dead before they could be faced about. The officers, too, and the war-tried sergeants, even while shouting "Forward!" would groan and drop. The pitiless blast of bullets and slugs hissed steadily into the clamorous, disorderly, reeling groups which had taken the place of those lately aligned and obedient companies.

At last human nature could bear the torment no

longer. The gigantic might of discipline suddenly lost its hold, and some hundreds of the best troops in the world burst rearward on a run, leaving hundreds of their comrades lifeless, or disabled, or crawling feebly after them. Sir William Howe (what divinity could have saved him ?) walked off the field alone, his white silk stockings dabbled with the blood of his grenadiers, for every tuft of grass near the dead-line bore its witness to the slaughter.

But in a surprisingly short time, apparently not more than ten minutes, discipline re-established its super-human domination. The spirit of the army, and those minor afreets, the traditionary pride of each separate organization, came to the help of the shattered array. The moment these old soldiers were out of range of the bullets they fell to obeying the voices of their officers, or, if these had fallen silent, the mere physical clatter of the drums. They gathered in companies, extended in line, counted off and doubled ranks, precisely as if on parade.

Then, with just as orderly a march as before, they tramped forward again. It would not do for grenadiers and light infantry, the selected men and braggadocios of their respective regiments, to let themselves be beaten in sight of the line companies. They would never hear the last of it.

This time Howe permitted them to use their muskets. Every few yards they halted, fired by platoon, and reloaded; then, carefully dressing the ranks, they advanced fifty yards and volleyed again. It was the way Christians killed each other who had learned warfare in the school of the Great Frederic, and had not learned from anybody that it is best to look along the barrel

of a gun before pulling the trigger. Old men who fought against these laboriously trained soldiers have sent down the story that they did not even raise the piece to the shoulder in firing, but held it with the lock pressed against the right hip. No matter how they aimed, they hit but few Yankees.

At last they were among the thickly strewn bodies which marked the dead-line. And now several hundred spouts of smoke shot out from the hay-fence, and as many shrill whistles of death flew at the close scarlet files. There was many a sickening *chuck*, and an answering cry of pain or horror; but the English bore the leaden hail firmly, and sent back their platoon volleys. A long struggle ensued; some of the combatants estimated it at fifteen minutes, but that seems hardly possible. Probably the aim of the Americans was not so sure as when they were not being fired at; and no doubt the Englishmen were steadied by the fact that they were doing something themselves, and seemed to be inflicting damage. At all events, they stood doggedly, closing up over their fallen comrades, and bearing themselves like choice soldiers.

But they could not fling their bullet-smitten mass forward. No screaming of commands and entreaties could arouse the impetus for a charge. Gallant gentlemen and scarred veterans, who dashed ahead to entice the line after, fell to the last hero of them, two or three at the foot of the fence, and all uselessly. The massacre was insupportable; ere long the gaps remained unfilled except by dead; swarms of wounded were reeling or creeping to the rear; the companies had become ragged squads, the timid sidling behind the valiant; and, of a sudden, there was a recoil which

instantly changed to flight. Once more, as if hidden from death by Olympian clouds, Howe stood alone for a moment and walked away unhurt.

The battle on this wing was practically over. There was, indeed, a third rally; that "astonishing infantry" halted, fell in, and formed up as before; but their commander admitted that such a mere remnant could not carry the hay-fence. Of the eight or nine hundred brave fellows whom he had led forward, not more than forty-five minutes before, above half were killed or wounded. The two flank companies of the Twenty-Third regiment lost fifty-seven out of a total of eighty. The light company of the Thirty-Fifth, numbering thirty-eight officers and men, had three unhurt survivors. The forty grenadiers of the same regiment were reduced, before the battle ended, to six.

There was a rapid rearrangement. Abercrombie marched off his patient grenadiers to support Pigot in the attack on Breed's Hill. The light infantry advanced in squads to skirmish with Stark, Reed, and Knowlton, so as to prevent them from sending a detachment to the aid of Prescott. There was, by the way, little need of this demonstration, for the Americans behind the fence had so nearly exhausted their sixteen rounds of ammunition that they had been driven to use charges of powder which would scarcely reach. Surgeon Grant, toiling over the British wounded, was amazed to find that most of them had been hit in the legs, while the Americans, as we know, had aimed at the waistbands.

Now followed a period of comparative quiet for the provincials on the Mystic flat. Captain Trevett came up with two field-pieces, and fired eight four-pound

balls at the British, and said that he wished he had some more. The Hampshire men made port-holes for Callender's empty guns, and took sight along them at the light infantry, and wondered how far they would carry. Some of Knowlton's people became impatient, and sallied out to hunt the retiring grenadiers, but were ordered back. So little powder remained that no one returned the fire of the redcoated skirmishers, whose bullets whistled numerously over, and very rarely through, the rustic stockade.

Various men amused themselves with looking for traces of the combat and proofs of marksmanship. Captain Dearborn, of New Hampshire, curiously studied an apple tree behind his post, which had not received a scar up to the height of a tall man's head, while above that point trunk and branches were torn to slivers. In front of the Connecticut line, a low fence to which the grenadiers had advanced was so riddled by Connecticut bullets that a boy could not lay a hand on any single rail without covering one or more shot-holes. It was obvious why the contest here had terminated as it did; the New Englanders had taken aim, and the Old Englanders had not.

CHAPTER XXV

THE REDOUBT

A SH FARNLEE did not witness the second attack of the grenadiers and light infantry upon the rail fence. It was less than three hundred yards from him, and he could have seen it all by merely turning his face that way, but there was something close at hand which would not let him turn his face. He heard a murmurous "They are coming," and, wheeling with a dreadful suspicion that the English were close under his elbow, he saw Pigot's wing advancing.

It was a broad array, somewhat in the form of a crescent, threatening both flanks of Prescott's position. There were the line companies of four regiments, averaging forty men per company, and a battalion of perhaps two hundred marines, making nearly fifteen hundred bayonets. In front of the breastwork were the Fifth and Fifty-Second, the former holding the right. In front of the redoubt were the Thirty-Eighth and Forty-Third, and, partly around the shoulder of the hill, the marines. Near Charlestown stood the Forty-Seventh, the sole reserve of the British force on the peninsula.

The advance was slow and methodical, as was the fashion of that martinet age. The red-faced men, sweltering in the fierce sunshine, and stooping under

their ponderous knapsacks, floundered through grass which hid their half-gaiters, and stopped repeatedly to climb or to push down fences. Then the left got into difficulties with a swarm of Americans who had garrisoned buildings on the outskirts of Charlestown. There was a sharp skirmish on that flank, and a halt of the English until it ended. Meantime the Copp's Hill battery opened angrily with shells and carcasses, while boats scudded shoreward from the *Somerset* bearing incendiary parties, so that in a few minutes the straggling village was well aflame.

This flank once cleared of provincials, Pigot's line recommenced its ascent. Ere long Farnlee began to distinguish faces, the various heights of different men, the decorated uniforms of the officers. Once he remembered to look for Moorcastle; but in the next thirty seconds he had forgotten him.

On the extreme right there was a tall captain, who had audaciously stepped to the front of his company and was climbing composedly, with his face bowed downwards, neither looking at his soldiers nor at his enemies. Ash resolved to keep his eye on that officer, and bring him down with his first bullet. But he found it strangely difficult to hold his mind fixed upon any special object. Only one idea was constant with him: he would not turn his back upon the regulars, he would show them—but he did not finish the thought.

A dragging, stammering wail of musketry broke out on his right; it was in the redoubt, but his first impression was that it came from the enemy; and he was still thinking thus when it swept into and along the breastwork. For minutes back, the Americans had been watching the English, with their firelocks laid

across the crumbly earth of the parapet. Prescott, waiting until the red line was within fifteen rods, had quietly given the order to commence firing; and one after another the hundreds of brown barrels had responded, each sending forth a hard bark, a slender spit of smoke, and a venomous whistle.

Ash levelled and looked for his captain, the gallant fellow who was too dangerous to be let live. But that particular captain had vanished as suddenly and utterly as if the earth had swallowed him. Our youngster merely saw scarlet figures struggling confusedly behind a gray, writhing vapor, and doing he could not tell what. He aimed at one, whether man or officer he did not care, and hastily pulled trigger. Then for another minute he saw nothing but the long, tawny firelock which he was reloading.

In this eager, half-blind way he fought for minutes, sometimes discerning a flitting shape in red, sometimes a group which might be approaching or might be retreating, sometimes a green slope and nothing more. Meanwhile there was a whistling of bullets past him, and once or twice he distinguished the sharp, astonished cry of a wounded man, though whether from friend or foe he could not be sure, and did not much care.

He was reloading for the sixth or seventh time when he heard, on the right, long-drawn yells of "Cease firing!" The steady barking of musketry subsided to sputters, to single shots, to silence. The smoke in front rapidly cleared, winding into shreds, drifting southward, vanishing. Presently he leaned over the parapet and looked wonderingly for the scarlet crescent. Only a few fragments of it were visible, and those fragments were a hundred and fifty yards distant, more

or less sheltered by knolls and fences. The first assault on Prescott's entrenchments had been bloodily repulsed.

"I wonder if they call that fighting," said Farnlee. "I supposed they would come in here and use their bayonets."

An iron-gray man, with the scar of an old wound on one cheek-bone, turned to him and made some reply. But Ash did not comprehend him, for at that moment the provincials in the redoubt broke out cheering, and those in the breastwork responded vociferously. Then some one bellowed, "God save the king!" and a good many laughed at the sneer, though not heartily, as if they still had a remnant of loyalty.

The scarred man, probably a veteran of the French War, now repeated his remark to Ash: "They tried hard to come in, sir. They mounted at more than one place. There was an officer nigh about got in, toward the middle of the work. Somebody brought him down just as he straightened up."

"You don't say so!" replied our surprised youngster, and hastened to finish reloading.

The second attack on the fence had been simultaneous with this first attack on the hill, and the result had been bloody failure along the whole British front from Charlestown to Mystic River. Even the artillery, after graping Knowlton without effect, and trying in vain to get elevation enough to enfilade the breast-work, was so harassed by a flanking ambuscade of provincials under Pomeroy that it wrenched its guns out of the puddly morass and retired. The light infantry began its long-range skirmishing, and Abercrombie led his surviving grenadiers to the help of Pigot, followed by the seemingly nonchalant Howe.

Henceforward the weight of the British battle was to fall upon the redoubt and breastwork, leaving the New Hampshire men in peace.

Ash Farnlee and his comrades could perceive that the scarlet crescent was reorganizing with wonderful rapidity. Officers ran about in the hot sunshine, shouting in hoarse, tired voices, gesticulating angrily, brandishing their rapiers, sometimes using the point. A few of the soldiers had retreated toward the landing, but they were hunted down by sergeants and driven back. Other stragglers were suffered to crawl or stagger away at their pleasure; but those, as Ash comprehended, were the wounded; and he comprehended it without compassion. There were so many less to fight; there was so much done—thank Heaven! Moreover, the sight of the conflagration of Charlestown, only a third of a mile away, was enough to make him pitiless. Hundreds of dwellings were blazing; the coasters on the stocks and at the wharves were blazing also; homes, and industries, and fortunes were vanishing in smoke and flame. It was a magnificent and an infuriating spectacle.

Ere long, by way of preluding the second assault, the Copp's Hill battery and two or three vessels opened on the entrenchments. The Americans fell silent for a time under this worrying clamor, but resumed their cheerfulness when Colonel Prescott made the rounds of the works, and even hurrahed a little. The leader's grim, sunburnt face looked jaded, but it also looked determined and confident. Of course he had some words of encouragement and instruction for his men. They must and could hold the hill; they must reserve their fire till the British were within thirty yards; they

must choose their marks and make every shot tell. Then, with a cheerful, springy step, he strode back to the redoubt.

Ash Farnlee hoped that this visit from the commander had made all the men feel willing to conquer or die. But the next minute he heard a fellow say, "I wish our folks would beat, or else the British would; I'm gittin' dum tired of this."

By this time Howe had organized the second advance upon the redoubt and breastwork. The grenadiers were on the extreme right; the Forty-Seventh had moved up to fill a gap between the first battalion of marines and the Forty-Third; the line, notwithstanding losses, must have been as strong as ever. No reserve remained but the second battalion of marines, which had been brought over for that purpose.

The troops were still in heavy marching trim, and they climbed the hill in their former deliberate way. One regiment (of course, Ash did not know what regiment) came on in open order, the files ten feet apart and twelve men deep. The halts to dress the ranks were frequent, and after each one the companies volleyed. The balls whistled in flights over the parapet, and skipped rearward as far as the eastern slope of Bunker Hill, pelting and demoralizing the reserve which Putnam was trying to establish there. The guns of Copp's Hill bellowed on until the assailants were half-way up to the redoubt. The shrouds of the vessels in the harbor, and the neighboring shores and eminences, were crowded with spectators. Seldom has a battle been fought amidst such an array of witnesses.

This time Ash was prepared, his long weapon lying

across the parapet, and his eye fixed on one particular Briton, a tall soldier whose upturned face was strangely stained with blue. On the youngster's right stood the cherry-cheeked boy, partly covered by the shoulder of his mild-eyed father, but holding his fowling-piece steady with his small brown hands, and calmly squinting along the rusty barrel. Some older men were not behaving so well, but kept their heads too well covered to take aim, as is not uncommon behind fortifications.

The blue-faced redcoat came steadily onward. At the word of command he halted and fired with his comrades, and at the word of command he reloaded and stalked forward with his comrades. For him and for the others, more especially those of the front rank, it must have been a fearsome situation. He could not help thinking that in the next minute his rear-rank man might step over his body as though it were a log of wood. Of course he did not want to be there; he would rather have been taking sixty lashes on the Common. But discipline had got him in its pitiless clutch, and so he marched on with even pace into the jaws of death; no holy martyr ever marched more firmly to the stake.

At last the two lines were less than fifty yards apart. Ash Farnlee could distinguish that Blue Peter had one blackened eye, and that his lips were smeared black with biting cartridges, when he forgot him in the surprise of hearing a stentorian voice call out, "Colonel Abercrombie, are the Yankees cowards?"

Glancing over one shoulder, he caught sight of a rusty green uniform, queried if the shouter could be Putnam, and thought no more of it for hours. For

now the English were alarmingly near, and Prescott screamed out the order, "Fire!"

A crash of musketry broke from the redoubt, and clattered swiftly along the line of the breastwork. Ash did not shoot the blue-faced man; that man had vanished as though by enchantment; it may have been Abner Sly who ended the career of Blue Peter. So Ash aimed at some other redcoat, and dropped back to reload with all speed.

This time there was a close struggle of no one can say how many minutes. The English returned bullet for bullet, and thus quelled a little the fire of the Americans, or at least rendered it less cool and effective. If a company was disordered, its officers steadied it promptly; or, if the officers had fallen, the sergeants answered nearly as well.

The long scarlet line wavered this way and that like a huge serpent. Here and there a writhing fold of it reached the parapet, and struggled to secure a hold. Once, twice, and a third time Captain Harris of the Fifth Foot (later in life Lord Harris, and one of the conquerors of India) clambered up the face of the breastwork, shouting for his company to follow. But twice he slipped back, and then a shot in the head flung him senseless into the arms of his lieutenant, young Rawdon, who also lived to be great in arms and famous in India. A thicket of bayonets had gathered around Harris, but it wavered now and dropped away from the parapet.

Then came a wild flurry of fighting which confounded Farnlee for a minute. Suddenly and incomprehensibly, as though it had happened in a nightmare, he found himself struggling with a tall, handsome man in

the red uniform, who seemed to be breathless with fatigue or with excitement. Ash parried a bayonet-thrust with his gun, and then drove the muzzle of it into his assailant's shoulder, throwing him backward. But other men in scarlet were at hand, the foremost firing or lunging, and all shouting exultantly. They were the grenadiers of Abercrombie, turning the open flank of the breastwork.

Ash sent one wild shot among them, and ran in a panic for the redoubt. Other men ahead of him were running too, some of them struggling and jostling into the northern sally-port, some disappearing over a knoll which lay to the rear. The grenadiers poured on, huzzahing, but all of a sudden came to a halt, staring about them like startled cattle, while two or three shrieked and dropped. A sharp fire was rattling into them from skirmishers on their right, who may have been Febiger's detachment from Gerrish's regiment, or any one of several other vagrant squads of provincials, for several such drifted up to the fighting line, and perhaps drifted back as swiftly.

The grenadiers returned this fusillade, but immediately another began upon them from the northern face of the redoubt, and their halt changed into a hesitating recoil. Abercrombie was already down, and they stood in sore need of a leader. By the time that Ash Farnlee had reloaded and laid his piece across the parapet, they were all running around the end of the breastwork, except a few who would never answer roll-call again.

In fact, a recall had been sounded, though these stormers could hardly have heard it. The whole line had suffered severely, and was in hopeless confusion.

All at once hundreds of scarlet uniforms hasted down the slope, pursued by a loose but telling fire of balls and slugs. Of the four brave fellows who carried off Captain Harris, one was killed and two wounded before he could be got out of range. The men in general were much disheartened; many of them were determined to fight no more. They ran by their officers, panted clear across the scorching flat, and flung themselves into the boats.

The Americans hurrahed loudly, and reoccupied the breastwork. Ash Farnlee, as he strode back to his post on the extreme left, stepped over the bodies of the cherry-cheeked boy and his father without feeling a throb of pity or horror, so exultant was he over the repulse of the English.

- Hours later, when the battle madness had quite ended, the sight of a sufferer with a shattered leg made him cringe in every fibre and implore the operating surgeon for God's sake to be gentle.

CHAPTER XXVI

HAND TO HAND

THE exulting of the Americans over the English recoil subsided to grave silence as they turned up their nearly empty powder-horns and looked about them for vanished comrades.

This last protracted struggle had woefully reduced the ammunition. Excepting a few newly arrived stragglers, nobody had more than three or four charges of powder left, and very many had nothing but slugs in place of bullets. As for the double rank of defenders which lately lined the parapet, what had become of it? Prescott came out of the sally-port, glared angrily along the breastwork, and demanded, "Where are Frye's and Bridge's men?"

"Some have gone," admitted Lieutenant-Colonel Parker. "But they had really used up their munitions, Colonel. What was the use of their staying? No bayonets, you know."

"Your people had better go into the redoubt," advised Prescott. Then he turned to Farnlee, and added, "Captain, find General Putnam, and advise him of the state we are in. Tell him I need men and powder and ball to make sure of victory. Tell him I distinctly understood that I was to be re-enforced. If he can't drive those skulkers on, perhaps he can lead them on."

He was very bitter, as a man may well be who is doing his whole duty nobly, but finds that he is in danger of defeat through the fault of others.

Ash shouldered his gun and ran with all speed toward Bunker Hill. Ahead of him, but especially on the hollowing saddle which unites the two eminences, were squads of men retiring, some of them escorting wounded comrades, ten or twenty around a single sufferer, though only four or five could get their hands on him. One entire company, formed in double file, was retreating in good order. Another company, advancing in line, met it, halted it, levelled firelocks, and forced it to 'bout face. The balls of Copp's Hill battery were flying over the redoubt, and bouncing about in an uncertain, hateful way. A single gray-haired horseman, in a green and scarlet uniform, was lashing his sweating horse through this iron storm, gesticulating eagerly to the anxious-eyed stragglers, and hoarsely urging them back to the battle. Farnlee halted him, and hastily repeated Prescott's message.

"God's curse!" shouted Putnam, "I wish I could get re-enforcements to him. There goes forward the last of my own reserve, rallying a gang of stragglers. Some of your Massachusetts men have gone up, too—to please themselves, not me. They would mind a British general quicker than a Connecticut one. Gerrish is back there behind the hill, sweating with heat and fright. His men are staring at him and waiting for him to move. God's curse! what an army! The men are as good as others; but it's not an army."

"Can't you lead them up?" asked Farnlee, who felt bound to repeat all of Prescott's message, though it suggested a reproach.

"Have n't I *been* up there!" shouted Putnam, indignantly. "How many of them have followed me? Six times this old horse has gone through the cannonade to show the way. Tell Colonel Prescott that I am doing my best, as he is doing his. But hereafter, if we want to win battles, we must have one government for all the provinces."

Here he dashed off to check and rally fugitives, while Farnlee hastened back to the redoubt.

A troubled scowl was the sole comment which Prescott rendered upon Putnam's message. But he strode swiftly to the eastern front of the redoubt, and addressed some earnest words to a gayly dressed man who was leaning over the parapet, apparently studying the reorganization of the British array. Ash could not hear the dialogue, but he saw this man turn to look at the rearward hill, and then shake his head with a sad smile. It was the President of that Committee of Safety whose recommendation had brought on this battle. Farnlee guessed that Prescott had urged Warren to go and take command of the Massachusetts men on Bunker Hill, and that Warren had professed his inability to bring order out of that simmering chaos.

Meantime the redoubt was preparing for its final struggle. At this moment, if we may trust to the hasty and no doubt troubled observation of Prescott, there were not more than one hundred and fifty serviceable men in it. Not very many had been hit, but nearly every wounded man had been borne to the rear, and rarely indeed had the bearers returned. All those, also, who were quite without ammunition, and all who were of a specially timid nature, had departed. So it ever is in undisciplined armies; so it would have been

with the English if they had chosen their own officers; so it has been, or worse, in every field-engagement of the American militia, except perhaps at Bennington.

Those who remained were the flower of the original eight hundred. They were all there willingly; all volunteers for a forlorn hope. It seems impossible that, with four or five shots apiece and with perhaps forty or fifty bayonets in all, they could have had a strong expectation of beating off the attack of twelve or fifteen hundred veterans, abundantly furnished with arms and ammunition. But they were ashamed to desert their leader, and he would not leave his post till he was pushed out of it.

Quietly and intelligently they made their final arrangements. A few cannon cartridges had been left by Gridley's section of artillery, and the coarse powder was served out to those who had least or none, every grain being husbanded like food among starving men. All the loose stones in the redoubt were gathered into piles for throwing. The men who had bayonets were assigned to such parts of the defences as seemed most assailable. Not a foot of that trampled and bloody earth did Prescott mean to give up while he had a round of ammunition left. He fought his redoubt as John Paul Jones afterwards fought his frigate.

The English also put their last ounce of strength into the closing wrestle. By Howe's permission the soldiers unslung their knapsacks, and many of them took off their coats and stocks. Clinton rowed over from Boston, seized upon the second battalion of marines, and pushed it forward to the extreme left of the scarlet line, where it could reach around the south-western angle of the redoubt. There was not a platoon

of infantry left in the way of reserve. If the Americans could have gathered men and bullets enough to again repulse the English, the latter would have had nothing to rally upon but two light batteries and the fire of their shipping.

Once more the long semicircle of bayonets commenced that bloody ascent. Once more, after several alignments and volleyings, it gathered around those low mounds of raw earth, which a man could run over. Then came the firing of the defenders. Just think of the fatalness of it, if they aimed—thirty yards for squirrel-hunters! The second battalion of marines—surely not more than two hundred men—lost forty in this single assault.

But the English had only to endure for a few minutes, and victory was certain. Their wonderful discipline and their hold-fast temper carried them through. Erelong the shots from the defences became rare, and the cries of death-stricken men outside rarer still. Some of the Americans began to hurl stones, revealing their lack of ammunition, and thus cheering the assailants. Groups of bayonets gathered here and there, wavered menacingly just without the parapet, and strove to mount.

For a brief time these surges of steel were steadily repelled. Prescott, standing in the centre of the redoubt, hurried squads from one endangered point to another. Valiant British officers who sprang upon the rampart were flung backward by thrusts or blows of musket-butts, or a final slug from some powder-fouled muzzle. Then the bayonets would recoil a yard or two, but in a moment they would quiver close again. Moreover, there was no repose for the garrison, for the

redoubt was attacked on three sides. There were marines around the southwestern corner, and grenadiers around the northeastern, and line companies between.

It was on the northern front, not far from the head of the breastwork, that Ash Farnlee concluded his part of the combat. He fired at a captain of grenadiers who was boldly leading forward the remnant of his company. He saw the captain fall; but then he saw the lieutenant, a tall, sandy-faced young fellow, spring to the front; and he dropped back in a wild hurry to reload, wondering if he should have time. He had scarcely poured his last charge of powder when the lieutenant stood on the rampart, waving his sword exultingly and shouting, "The day is ours."

There were provincials close beneath him on either side, firing at his soldiers or at other grenadiers, but he had no time to notice them, or anything else on earth. A youngster who stood close by Farnlee levelled his long firelock; and Lieutenant John Dalrymple fell headlong into the redoubt, welcomed by death to victory.

Outside was his company, the grenadiers of the Sixty-Third, reduced now to five privates and a sergeant. The sergeant rallied his five men; if there had been but one left, he would have rallied that one; and with the words, "Conquer or die," he led his sublime fragment into the redoubt. If Prescott must be beaten, it was fit and consolatory that he should be beaten by such men, so disciplined, so long-enduring, so steadfast. To an American soldier it is a pleasure to ask England to remember their glory.

At this moment Ash Farnlee became conscious that the redoubt was taken. Behind him arose an awful

clamor of hurrahing, cursing, shrieking, mingled with straggling shots, heavy blows, and clashing of steel. The firing had very nearly ceased, for the two parties were wonderfully crammed together, so that a ball might kill friend as well as foe. The smoke and dust in the work were so thick that it was impossible to see twenty feet with distinctness. But the fact was this: the English had forced an entrance on three sides almost simultaneously; and the Americans, crowded into the centre, were jostling and fighting their way toward the sally-port.

It is impossible to describe this reeling, groping, savage scuffle, in which the combatants were so near each other that they could have shaken hands, and yet so blinded that they could hardly see to lunge and strike. The English, exhausted with heat and fatigue, did not deliver a general and strenuous onset, only a few of them using their bayonets, while the great majority merely shouted over their victory, not even aware, apparently, that there was still fighting. A hundred or so of the Americans reached the sally-port and groped, or stumbled, or were thrust out of it, and thence took to their heels. Prescott would not run, but retreated with long strides, parrying both bayonet and rapier, though his clothing was pierced in several places.

Outside the work, the slaughter was greater than within, for the Americans had to run the gauntlet of a flanking fire from the marines who had climbed the southwestern face of the hill, and many shots also followed them from the line companies and grenadiers. Here, some sixty or eighty yards from the sally-port, Ash saw Warren waving his sword as if for a rally, and

then saw him clap his left hand to his head just behind the ear and fall softly backward, one more dead hero, the most lamented of all.

Down on the Mystic flat there was still battling: the remnants of the light infantry peppering pertinaciously at the rail fence; a column of grenadiers and linesmen struggling in vain to capture a stone wall held by the Connecticut men; the Americans victorious along this part of the line, but outflanked, and obviously sure to retreat; in the end marching steadily off the field and saving one of their four-pounders.

But on Breed's Hill all was wreck and flight: the Medford road and the open fields dotted with fugitives; the Copp's Hill battery and the floating batteries playing on them furiously; old Putnam waving his rapier, and cursing to bring about a rally; not a man heeding him. The hill had been lost; and yet it was won for all future time—so surely won that no marvel Warren smiled as he lay there dead.

The English officers, smiling also from their victory, gathered around him and surveyed him intently.

"That is he," said one. "I remember that laced waistcoat."

"He is very handsome," said Major Small. "I never saw a handsomer fellow laid out."

"It makes our loss equal," said Howe. "That man counts for five hundred rank and file."

CHAPTER XXVII

RESULTS AND REMINISCENCES

FOR some days Ash Farnlee was very sore and angry over the result of the battle. It seemed to him that the English had surpassed the Americans in manhood; that Moorcastle and his brother John Bulls were right in scorning colonists as an inferior race.

To be sure, *he* had fought; and the men just around him had fought; and they would have whipped, too, if they had had more ammunition. But the others? He felt quite sure that the others had skulked; there had been skulking everywhere but just where he had been himself. At first he sympathized entirely with Prescott and Stark in denouncing as poltroons a great many people, most of whom could not be specified by name, while others turned up among the killed and wounded. But presently he discovered that these two heroes knew almost nothing of each other's battrings.

"The principal loss to the king's troops was in front of the rail fence," said the positive old Colonel who was destined to conquer at Bennington.

"Bless my body! what do you mean?" demanded Prescott. "We repulsed them twice, and laid them out in windrows."

" You did!" exclaimed Stark. " It 's perfectly certain that *we* did. Two assaults! both driven back! most wonderful slaughter! at least five hundred hit! Yes, Colonel, *two* assaults!"

" Bless my body!" repeated Prescott, " I should like to know when. Oh, well,—I did see the first; I remember that."

" But the second followed within twenty minutes of the first. Yes, they were up and bunting at us again within twenty minutes."

" You don't mean it! Ah—I was hotly engaged then myself; very, *very* hotly engaged, Colonel. Three assaults, Colonel!"

" You astonish me. I should have said two, on your side. Well, Prescott, this is the way it used to be in the Seven Years War. A man never knew much about a battle except just the bit where he fought himself."

" Exactly," Prescott admitted, with a reminiscent air. " And he always thought that that bit was the nub of the whole tussle."

So the two iron-gray warriors came to an agreement on this point; but ere long they locked horns again with regard to the number of casualties.

" Not much over a hundred of our people killed and wounded," said Prescott. " A hundred and forty, at the outside; and more than half from my battalion."

" Yours!" glowered Stark. " Why, we Hampshire men lost ninety-three; that is, at least eighty-eight."

" How the dickens could that happen? Did you lose them into Mystic River?"

Stark appealed to Knowlton, but the Captain knew

nothing about it except that *he* had lost forty-seven killed and wounded, including two bayoneted.

"*You* lost forty-seven?" queried Prescott. "I thought you went off to the rear with Callender."

Then there was a roar of laughter from the three heroes, Stark and Knowlton opening it, and Prescott joining in.

Eventually, but weeks after the battle, this question of casualties was settled also. It appeared that the Americans had lost about four hundred and fifty killed and wounded, including thirty left on the field so mangled with bayonets that twenty of them died within a few days.

"Well, that will do," said Prescott to Aid-de-Camp Farnlee, who showed him the returns. "That's a great deal better outcome for those other fellows than I expected them to make. Frye and Bridge, forty-four each; that's not so bad for Frye and Bridge. But my regiment held the hot end of the poker: seventy hit, besides the poor fellows not accounted for; that settles who did the heavy fighting. But is n't it astonishing the second line lost so many? Well, it serves them right for hanging back, instead of coming up to the front and making a victory of it. I am always pleased, Captain, when I see a skulker get a bullet. Well, well, we must n't grumble. Heaven has been pretty good to us—nearly eleven hundred redcoats down! How many more ditches, Captain, can Gage afford to buy at that price?"

In short, the Americans had easily come to talk of the battle as a sort of victory; and the officers were eager to show, each for himself, that *his* command had had a large share in it; and if they had not been thus

emulous, they probably would not have been good officers.

But Bunker Hill, though a defeat, was mightier than most victories; it was a tocsin to arms throughout the thirteen Anglo-Saxon colonies. The great majority of Americans, more especially those of pure English descent, promptly resolved to back the men who had defied Gage's insolent proclamations and had confronted his veterans with chewed bullets and pewter slugs and rusty nails.

There was little more talk (except in a lurking way, and mainly among gentlemen attired in tar and feathers) about submitting to the pleasure and clemency of his Gracious Majesty. If a clergyman preached a political sermon on the text, "I will arise and go unto my father," he was promptly advised, by an irresistible majority of his congregation, to arise and go unto Halifax. The old-time loyalty, a sentiment which lately affected everybody but Sam Adams, had been mortally blasted by a few hours of cannon and musketry. It seemed as if a generation of Americans had died, and a totally new and adverse one had succeeded it.

Not many Yankee tears were shed over the one thousand and sixty valiant Englishmen who had fallen for ministry and king. Pious Doctor Stiles, sometime president of Yale College, ciphered up pages on pages of his diary (paper ever so many shillings a pound) to prove to himself that Putnam had laid out three thousand of them, or, better yet, five thousand. Pastor Peter Thacher was comfortably persuaded "yt of three thousand who marched out on ye expedition no less than fifteen hundred were killed and wounded."

Two millions of people who had prayed all their lives for the success of the English army, were of a sudden wild with eagerness to lick that army out of its gaiters.

In short, there was no longer any question of divine right; not even much interest in the question of British rights for Americans; but a burning interest in the question of equal manhood. The faction of Uncle Fenn was practically dead; the faction of old Squire Farnlee was mortally ill; the faction of young Ash Farnlee prevailed.

This revolutionary fact was visible to the eye all about Cambridge. The regiments filled up; the soldiers toiled at entrenchments as they had never toiled at their harvests; redoubts and breastworks sprouted like mushrooms on every hill from Mystic River to Dorchester. Furthermore, the provinces of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, observant of the fatal lack of united action in the late battle, had directed their forces to obey the orders of the Massachusetts commander-in-chief.

And then came Washington, the noblest figure as yet in American history, nor surpassed for nobility in any history. He captivated at once an army which was suffering for a leader who should be an incarnation of nationality. At sight of the magnificent Virginian, Ash Farnlee forgot all his personal motives for taking up arms. He wanted to die for that man and America, the two together, one and inseparable. He cracked his voice in saluting the lofty figure, the ample spread of blue uniform, the ponderous gold-lace epaulets, the grave and benign countenance. He had not a doubt of such a general's generalship. His heart was gone

again; gone, as it seemed to him, beyond recovery; gone beyond the reach of woman.

How could he feel otherwise? Every man around him was splitting his throat; and few youths can resist the magnetism of general emotion. Moreover, there was something personal in his excitement, although he did not know it. His sore and lonely heart needed some one to cling to and worship; furthermore it wanted an avenger, and here surely was one. Here was a man who would help him to enter Boston; to place the American flag above the English; to trample at once on rival and false ladye. In shouting as he did for Washington he was shouting, more than he divined, for himself.

There was now a national war-chief, for the Congress at Philadelphia had adopted the array at Cambridge as a Continental army, and Washington and his generals had Continental commissions. He took hold of his military duties with a firm hand; he broke up and re-organized divisions and brigades; he sent disorderliness to the whipping-post. Everybody in the whole rabble encampment obeyed him, and wanted to. Everybody repeated to everybody else his terse counsels and his rare utterances of opinion.

One day Abner Sly beckoned Ash Farnlee aside and mumbled in his Yankee Doric: "Caption, they say his Excellency has been talkin' abeout Bunker Hill. He says as heow that battle was fit on our side by a few hundred brave chaps that wanted to fight it, and on the British side by every chap that came over from Bosting. That 's the differ, says his Excellency, between no discipline and discipline."

A little later Old Put ran against our staff-officer,

and stopped long enough to murmur: "Have you heard his Excellency's opinion of the battle? He says it was fought on our side by a few hundred brave men who chose to fight it, and on the British side by every man who made the landing. That is the difference, says his Excellency, between indiscipline and discipline."

Not ten minutes afterward Ash encountered his father, who laid an impressive hand on his shoulder and said: "Asahel, we have a man over us who never speaks but he sheds light. He has analyzed our late battle with a discrimination and justness which make it a notable lesson in warfare. He says it was fought on our side by a few hundred brave men who elected to fight it, and on the British side by every man on the peninsula. That is the difference, observed his Excellency, between indiscipline and discipline."

Ash could willingly have listened to the tale a fourth time, and a fifth, and a tenth. He treasured up every word that he heard of as dropping from the lips of his Excellency; and he confidently expected that an Excellency who could utter such words would soon best the British lion. His father, the serious and shrewd old lawyer, was equally bewizarded by Washington.

"Asahel," he said, "that man is common-sense and uprightness raised to the elevation of genius. And the most astonishing thing about him is that when he has nothing to say he holds his tongue. Asahel, I have lived sixty years in this loquacious world, and I never before saw a notable man who was great enough for that,—to hold his tongue when he had nothing to —say."

"Father," said Ash, "it seems to me that we are a

very cheerful set of beaten people. I venture to believe that the redcoats, with all their boasts of victory, have not half our cheerfulness and confidence."

He was quite correct. The garrison of Boston was extremely unhappy, and had plenty of reasons for it. The soldiers had long been overworked; fifteen regiments, but not more than six thousand serviceable men; off fatigue-duty at night and on picket in the morning. And now had come this woeful victory; two hundred and forty comrades to bury; more than eight hundred in hospital. And such hospitals!—even officers could not get mutton broth; no money could purchase it. Some of the noblest youth of England—limbs off, skulls trepanned, wounds gangrened, raving with fever,—lay between life and death, far worse off than if they had been prisoners among the Yankees.

A voice of growling as to the management of the late battle went up from this pitiable army. Of course lieutenants and captains could not catechise and confute and reprove major-generals; nor was it possible to be huffy with Sir William's staff-officers, inasmuch as the entire eleven of them had been killed or wounded. But whenever Captain Moorcastle, the confidential aid of General Gage, dropped into the Swan Tavern for a chat, he had some tactical flings to put up with. It was rather hard on him, by the way, for he had been through the whole of the battle, butting at rail fences and earthworks as stubbornly as anybody, and receiving three shots through his uniform. Indeed, Gage had been rather savage with him for fighting so much, instead of attending to his proper business of carrying orders and transmitting information.

All the same, he was treated in the Swan Tavern like

a scapegoat, especially by fellows of his own honorable station in society. One of the severest of these commentators was an "officer of rank" (altogether too high in family to be named by the discreet reporters of that day), a tall and raw-boned man with a sandy complexion, long front teeth, and eyes which reminded one of gray granite.

"I tell you, Moorcastle," said this impressive personage, "the victory has cost us dear, very dear indeed. Nor do I see that we have got one solid benefit in return, or that we are likely to get any. Unless, indeed, it is an advantage to learn that the Americans are as good soldiers as ours when they are as well handled. And let me add that I am not alone in this opinion. Since I landed here an officer who was in both these late affairs has assured me that the king's troops would have been totally destroyed in each if the provincials had known their own strength."

Before Moorcastle could reply, an officer of the navy, a swarthy little man with merry brown eyes, threw in his broadside. "I am with you there, Colonel. The Americans are not the poltroons that I had been taught to believe. I watched them closely the other day; they disputed every inch of the ground. And I consider them a noble people,—a people of liberal and noble sentiments. Who can blame them for loving liberty? Not Englishmen, I hope."

"By Jove, no!" echoed a diminutive youngster in grenadier uniform who bore one arm nobly in a sling. "So far as the origins of this fight are concerned I acquit the colonists of all blame. I wish Lord North had to head us in person. I wish it was his skull that was laid open instead of poor Harris's." He paused a

moment, and then added with feeling: "Poor Harris! I wonder if he 'll come out of that. Trepanning is a doosid ugly business."

"Yes, and poor Drew!" added a light-infantry officer who was twice as big as the grenadier. "Three bullets through him, two contusions, and a dislocated shoulder! Of course he can't live, though he 's in wonderful spirits. And his company! thirty-five hit out of thirty-eight! By Jove, what a bill! What marksmen!"

"Marksmen, yes, in every sense," said the navy man. "They hit the mark and they toed the mark. I wanted to hurrah for Putnam's fellows, fighting so gallantly *pro aris et focis*. But, let me tell you, another such onset will be our ruin. We may make a dinner for the Yankees, but there won't be enough left for their supper."

"Well, gentlemen," began Moorcastle, "I don't know that I can argue so many subjects at once. I merely enquire why you come at *me* with this tone and manner. You seem to hold me personally responsible for something."

Here another officer, a middle-aged man with a pensive, scholarly face, joined in the dialogue: "*Monsieur l'aide de camp*, we can't go at our generals, of course. Yet in view of the results we can't help grumbling. What under heaven led somebody (we don't undertake to say which somebody) to devise such a plan of battle?"

"What 's the matter with the plan, Major?" demanded Moorcastle. "General Burgoyne says it was perfect."

"Perfect!" the Major groaned. "Perfect for a

parade, I grant it. General Braddock could n't have done better. But for a battle ? Why, we did n't even reconnoitre before landing. We knew nothing about the grass fence till it stopped us and sent us back for re-enforcements. And why was n't that fence enfiladed by the navy ? Or by moving up the Charles River in force we could have threatened Putnam's communications, and forced him to abandon the eminence without fighting. But no. We must take the bull by the horns; we must move upon the front, just where the foe wanted us; we must show the fair ones of Boston how British soldiers can stand fire. I hope you liked it while you were standing it, Moorcastle."

" Demmit, I did n't want to be there," grumbled the cynical Captain. " I went there because a gentleman must."

" Yes; and a poor devil in the ranks must, also. But that is no reason why both should have their brains knocked out against the solidest point of the enemy's position. Our tactics are founded on the military maxim that Yankees are cowards. And so we sacrifice a thousand fine soldiers when a loss of two hundred would have secured the peninsula, and perhaps given us a thousand prisoners wherewith to impose terms."

" We captured a boy," scoffed the little grenadier. " The second battalion of marines surrounded him as he was turning the left wing of our army."

" What are you going to do with him, Moorcastle ?" demanded the bluejacket. " Or has n't the council of war been able to agree ?"

" The General has let him loose," said Moorcastle. " He was n't a combatant."

"Let him loose ! That 's dem'd imprudent. He may build a redoubt somewhere and shoot a hundred and ten of our marines. That 's the exact number we lost the other day. Poor devils of marines!"

"Are the tarpaulins crying much over the losses of the marines ?" asked Moorcastle.

"The tarpaulins are quite capable of crying when they see British soldiers massacred and repulsed," retorted the naval officer.

Moorcastle emptied his glass of punch, and sprang to his feet. "What is the use of flinging all this at *me*?" he demanded. "A retinue officer is not the commander-in-chief, and he must be civil to his commander-in-chief. I can't tell his Excellency that he is a mooncalf, and that you think so; nor do I believe that you wish me to do it."

"I would n't mind," laughed the bluejacket.

"Why not go at your admiral, then ? Why did n't *he* send up something to enfilade the grass fence, if it was so easy to do ?"

"Curst if I know. Perhaps he was requested not to by his Excellency."

"Good-night," said Moorcastle. "Before I come here again, I 'll peep through the window; and if you have your hypped faces on, I 'll stay outside, demme if I don't."

When the aid had departed, the naval man laughed softly and said, "We have rather keelhauled Moork to-night."

"And I had n't half finished my lecture on tactics," added the Major. "When shall we comprehend that battles are not parades ? When shall we learn not to fight just where and how the enemy pleases ?"

"Oh, wait and see," laughed the tiny grenadier.
"Headquarters will be cautious enough next time.
I 'll wager twenty guineas Sir William turns out a
Fabius Maximus—or Minimus."

CHAPTER XXVIII

MOORCASTLE RECOLLECTS HULDAH

MOORCASTLE sulked away by himself, wondering how he could make a pleasant evening of it. He passed the Province House, where the commander-in-chief dwelt, and he passed it with intentional expedition, for he knew that Gage would keelhaul him worse than the fellows at the Swan Tavern.

His Excellency had been in a beastly ill-humor ever since his victory. He did not mean to be exacting and fault-finding and savage. But every time that he thought of his thousand or more of killed and wounded, every time that he wondered what sort of a letter the Secretary of War would write him, he cringed and pitied himself and swore at whatever came handy. He wanted somebody to share his sufferings, and so he grumbled right and left, like certain invalids.

Moorcastle was tired of work and worry; of writing or dictating letters and orders by the ream; of listening to no end of dolorous snarling. He was determined that headquarters should not mount him again before he had had one evening of pleasaunce, or at least one long night of slumber. It had been his intention to play cards till midnight at the Swan Tavern; but the fellows there had turned up too deuced rusty, and controversial, and Whiggish. As a man with an interior

adamantine opinion of his own he felt no less disgusted with the result of headquarter tactics than the others. But as a staff-officer he preferred to keep out of those anti-ministerial growleries.

The Boston which he now promenaded was not calculated to amuse and cheer. Of the sixteen or seventeen thousand inhabitants, nine or ten thousand had contrived to get out of it; and their once prosperous presence had been poorly replaced by twelve or fifteen hundred beggared loyalist refugees. Such burghers as remained, excepting a few government officials and a few well-to-do people like the Oakbridges, were on the confines of pauperism. Salted provisions were very dear, and fresh provisions were a memory, a vision. The Regulators had all they could do to save the nearly deserted city from being plundered and burned by a ragged, half-famished rabble.

Where should Moorcastle seek refuge from the dismalness of things in general? Why not with Huldah Oakbridge? He had not had an evening with that little girl since—when was it? Well, it was quite a while ago; it was before the battle. What a tragedy it is, by the way, for a girl to love a man who has a distracting amount of hard, fierce, masculine work to do!

Moorcastle found nobody in the Oakbridge house besides Uncle Fenn. But the venerable Tory was so rejoiced to see a British officer, and made such a pathetic grab at his honoring society, that the Captain deigned to take a seat in the prim little parlor, glancing the while at the corner where he used to trifle with the old man's niece.

"What a glorious victory!" smirked the parson.
"Alas that it should have cost one drop of loyal blood!"

I have been to the hospitals during the day, doing what little this old body is capable of, until I tremble like a leaf. Oh, those poor, valiant, noble fellows, maimed and massacred in fighting for their king! I have beheld such spectacles of suffering heroism——”

“ For God’s sake, don’t tell me of it!” protested Moorcastle, who had heard enough concerning the cruel cost of that fruitless victory.

“ No, no,” said Uncle Fenn, in a compassionating tone, as we talk to a suffering child. “ We will speak of more cheerful matters. I understand that that rascally apothecary, Warren, was really and truly despatched. A spendthrift, bankrupted apothecary calling himself a patriot and a statesman! One can apprehend what the rest are when such a fellow as he is their leader. And the whole traitorous borough of Charlestown is in ruins! Those banditti must be convinced now that the king’s troops are capable of driving them from their strongest holds. I wish I could have seen them running over the Neck with the British bayonet in their craven backs.”

He had worked himself into such a fury of loyalism as to half believe that he was a born Englishman.

“ We did n’t follow them up,” said Moorcastle, sulkily. “ We were doosid glad to get rid of them.”

The gouty old non-combatant could not accept the fighting man’s moderate statement of the case.

“ Ah, you were considerate; you were merciful. I don’t understand these military manœuvres and strategies. For my part, I should have been disposed to cry, ‘ On to Cambridge! On to Roxbury!’ But doubtless it was well to let those felons gather together once more, so as to annihilate them at a blow.”

The parson talked so glibly about matters which were so difficult to accomplish, and his very nearly bedridden bloodthirstiness was so provokingly absurd, that Moorcastle wanted to contradict and tease him.

“ It won’t be so easy to annihilate them,” he said.

“ They are up to their eyes in fortifications. They are raising earthworks all over this end of the province. By Jupiter, nobody ever saw such entrenching, not since Julius Cæsar left Epirus.”

“ Hiding, hiding, hiding!” exulted the venerable, bomb-proof hero. “ Hiding like woodchucks in holes of the earth! But the British bayonet, by God’s gracious help, will soon dig them out.”

Then Sister Ann burst into the room with her characteristic momentum, as burly, and ponderous, and eager as a fine cow rushing after a bundle of fodder. Her face was flushed, her coarse brown hair tousled, and her dress a little unhooked behind. On sight of Moorcastle she suddenly courtesied and put on a sycophantic smile which would have been no credit to a beggar; but she could not at once suppress the heavings of her large corporality, and when she spoke her manner and voice and words were all too impressive.

“ I’m just ‘alf-‘n-‘alf,” she panted, dropping into a chair. “ Half dead and half alive,” she added, struggling for her breath and her “ haitches.” “ Captain Moorksle, excuse me, I vow I’m just worn to rags, and my sister-in-law the same, with working and watching over those poor wounded. How Mother Oakbridge stands it, slim an’ flimpsey an’ delicut as she is, I can’t see. But it ain’t the lifting an’ nussing that breaks me; it’s the operations. Oh, Lud, Lud! what sights! And those poor darlings moaning and

praying, and sending last messages to their wives and sweet'arts!"

"Enough! enough!" cried Uncle Fenn. "You are paining our noble friend."

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, Captain Moorksle," said Sister Ann. "I did n't think of your feelinks. I'm broken up never so, and don't rightly know what I'm about."

"We have got good news," continued the parson by way of changing the subject. "The rebels are fairly digging themselves under ground to hide from the king's troops."

"I should say they'd best," snapped Sister Ann. "Oh, how I despise 'em and hate 'em! It's puffeckly grieving to think of brave British soldiers and noble gen'lemen being murdered by such contemptible wretches. I met Mr. Hulton this morning—his Majesty's comishner of custms, you know, Captain Moorksle—a right-down, honest, true-artered Englishman—he deserves his position. He just igspressed igsackly my feelinks about those nawsty provincials. Says he, 'They are a most rude, degenerate, depraved race. I am mortified,' says he, 'when I think that they speak English, and can trace descent from our own stock. There is n't one among them,' says he, 'that has the least pretension to be called a gen'leman.' That's just what Mr. Hulton said to me this very morning, stanning in front of the Province 'Ouse, and General Gage not a fadom off, a-gittin' onto 'is 'orse."

This narrative seemed to interest and entertain the noble Captain. Sister Ann observed his smiling attentiveness, and thanked him with her own sweetest smile. By the way, she did not smile upon Uncle

Fenn, although he had consented unto her railings with repeated nods and chuckles of approbation. How could a true daughter of Highgate notice a provincial man of God when there was an epauleted English-born son of Mars in the room ?

"Good for Hulton!" said Moorcastle. "Sturdy old John Bull, Hulton!"

He flung out a harsh laugh of derision (not comprehended by his two auditors), which included Hulton and Sister Ann and Parson Fenn. There was a great deal of scorn for his brother humans in this interesting young man's nature. Small respect had he for Majesty's civil servants in the colonies, especially for those of British birth who had come over to scrabble for money.

Until lately, too, as we remember, he had despised the colonists, all of them. But that sentiment had considerably diminished since the affairs of Concord and Breed's Hill. An Englishman of the higher sort (if not also of the lower sorts) is apt to contract a certain respect for fellows who will fight him, especially if they occasionally lick him—not too often. Thus Moorcastle, as well as his commander-in-chief, had ceased to speak of the rebels as a "despicable rabble." But in regard to Americans who were not rebels, he had as poor an opinion of them as ever, and held them to be no better than a Britannic commissioner of customs, and not much finer than a female from Highgate.

"Hulton has n't heard the latest news," he continued, addressing Uncle Fenn as being the most respectable of his two ridiculous listeners. "There's one gentleman along with Old Put; I mean Colonel Washington of Virginia."

" You don't mean it!" gasped the parson. " Has Colonel Washington truly repaired to the rebel camp?"

" As general," said Moorcastle. " As commander-in-chief. As Excellency. Of course they must have an Excellency to treat on equal terms with our Excellency."

Uncle Fenn flung up his swollen hands and raised his watery eyes to heaven. The one American whom he had thoroughly respected and almost adored was George Washington. Franklin was a common-born creature; an infidel who had invented lightning-rods to parry the bolts of God's just anger; a fellow who had worked with his hands for wages, and by birth a Dissenter. But George Washington was a gentleman, and a member of the Church of England. The parson had hitherto refused to credit the rumor that his single absolutely great and respected countryman was at heart a rebel.

" Oh, Captain, Captain!" he groaned. " There falls a prince of angels from heaven. I had hoped that the Church here in the provinces would remain altogether pure of treason. True, the Johnsons of Connecticut had gone astray, and perhaps some others. But Brother Peters and many more of our fold had dared martyrdom rather than be silent in the presence of sin. I had trusted that the Church here, as a body, would hold fast by its traditions, its doctrine, and its king. And now Washington has fallen! Who, then, is safe? What remains untainted? May God have mercy upon this bedeviled country! Surely Satan has been unchained."

Moorcastle began to feel bored by his company, and to show it by shuffling his feet. Sister Ann promptly

introduced a subject which she hoped would interest and detain him. "I'm so sorry me sister was n't here to receive you, Captain. And she 'll be never so sorry, too, when she knows. She 's over to the hospittle (of course you might know she would be) a-caring for those blessed, suffering saints. The poor dear child runs, and watches, and endures beyond what one could believe. It vexes me ever so to see her moiling as she do, and no one saying thanks to her."

At this point Ann suddenly dissolved a small portion of her substance into tears. It was one of those seizures that the sturdiest of females are subject to when their nerves are shaken by fatigue, and lack of sleep, or other physical worries. She remembered just then that the Captain had not been so attentive of late as a hero should be who has received favors and is welcome to more; she called to mind the dreadful possibility that Huldah might not catch him, after all her risks and yearnings; and she could not suppress a leak of honest grief and spite.

The men stared at her in a perplexed, discomfited way, as men usually stare at a woman crying, when they don't want to kiss her. Sister Ann divined their aversion to her reddened nose, and she angrily stanched her gush of tenderness, longing to cuff them both.

"I suppose you must think I'm a baby," she quavered, trying to force a smile.

"I say, whatever became of that Lexington fellow?" was Moorcastle's irrelevant response. "Farnlee was his name, don't you recollect?"

Sister Ann was so astonished and worried by the query that her pulpy mouth merely fell ajar without replying. Uncle Fenn answered in loud excitement:

"He 's one of the pizenest of those rattlesnakes. He 's an aid-de-camp to that scoundrelly old Ward. He calls himself a captain."

"The doose! general suite!" laughed Moorcastle, amused, but not altogether contemptuous. "Why, he 's a brother officer of mine. You know the rebels still pretend that their army is in the service of his Majesty. Captain Farnlee!—my equal in grade! That 's a rather noteworthy fellow, don't you observe? I looked about for him, now and then, in the affair of the seventeenth. Wonder whether he was knocked over?"

"I suttenly 'ope so," snapped Sister Ann.

Moorcastle stared at her without showing either sympathy or disapproval, and then drew up his long shining boots under him as if about to leave.

"If you would only wait, Captain!" Ann burst out. "I could run round to the hospittle and fetch Huldah."

"Oh, doose take it! n-o," drawled the Captain, rising and throwing out his chest. "Do you think I 'm so selfish as all that? Let her stay there and comfort those poor fellows, Gedblesser."

"Yes, God bless her," whimpered Uncle Fenn, touched to the heart at hearing the high-born redcoat speak of his niece so kindly and piously. But he, too, the reverend old boot-licker (not ashamed of his flunkeyism, but glorying in it), desired in an absent-minded way that the girl might make a noble bridal, or at least be intimate with nobles. So he added, "If you could stop, sir, Ann would cheerfully run for you."

But the Captain had said his entire say on the subject, and would not trouble himself with another word

about it. He made an elegant bow, purely for his own satisfaction, and strode out of the house magnificently.

" You ought to have thought of it before, Ann," said Uncle Fenn when they two were alone.

" I 've been trying to work it in all along," explained Ann, rather sulkily. " But you kept on with your politics, sir. Of course he come for her, though he would n't ask for her, which I wanted to make him do it."

" Ah,—I did n't understand," the parson stammered. " I was desirous not to let the conversation drag."

Ann looked at him sidelong with the disgust of a pointer for an officious mastiff who bustles in barking and runs off the bird.

CHAPTER XXIX

HULDAH AS A HOSPITAL NURSE

THE fight of Bunker Hill had been a terrible business for Huldah Oakbridge. The cannonade of the morning awoke her with a fright, and sent her down very pale to the breakfast table, where she ate next to nothing.

"There will be no battle," she insisted again and again. "The Americans will go back to Cambridge. Don't you think so?"

She rose repeatedly from table to run to the window and call to passers-by for news. As soon as possible she and Sister Ann hastened to Beacon Hill to look at the redoubt, coming home at noon dizzy from want of food and nervous agitation. By this time Huldah was so pale that her mother would not let her leave the house again. For hours she sat with her head between her hands, looking at the table, or rather at vacancy, and starting at every outburst of cannon. When the long wail of musketry opened, she threw a wild glare at her mother, rose to her feet as if to run, and fainted. Her first words, on recovering her senses, were, "I know he is killed."

It was not till evening that Sister Ann came in with the news that Captain Moorcastle had got back to the city without a wound. Huldah smiled, colored violently, turned white as marble, and fainted again.

Then had come the hospital work; all the little, forlorn town rushing to care for the wounded; patriot committees and loyalist committees organizing in brotherhood; people who had not spoken to each other for months lifting the same sufferer; tears of bitter enemies dropping together and their prayers ascending together. The thirty bayoneted Americans were promptly and gladly received into sympathetic households. The eight hundred bullet-torn English, after filling the stinted military hospitals, overflowed into warehouses and public buildings.

In one of these warehouses Huldah labored for days and nights, doing work which she would have thought beyond her strength, and witnessing sights such as she had never imagined. She watched operations without being allowed to flinch; she carried away basins full of blood and tattered flesh; she did anything and everything; it was horrible. Now and then—that is, a thousand times a day—she remembered Captain Moorcastle. How dreadful (and she cringed physically at the thought) it would have been to see him lying there! like that boyish lieutenant, with the life-blood staining the bandages on his throat and the life-color gone from his face! or like that young grenadier with the regular features, whose leg was off close to his body, and who must die to-morrow!

Often she wondered if Moorcastle would come there, and so find her doing this work, and love her for it. Would he ever know how frightened she had been about him? Should she ever be permitted to tell him of it, with his arm perhaps around her, and his sweet voice thanking her? It would be too dreadful to have him never know; but it would kill her to find out that

he did not care. When she learned that a week had passed without his calling at the house for her, she did not blame him nor repine. Of course he had a terrible load of dreadful things to do; he probably had scarcely time to eat, and perhaps no time at all to sleep. Poor, suffering, noble, lovely, *dear Captain Moorcastle!*

Sister Ann had never before seen such a craze. She marvelled and trembled at it, though seeking to believe that such love must win. When she had found Moorcastle with Uncle Fenn, and comprehended of course that he was there to see Huldah, she had joyfully trusted that he was full of feeling concerning the girl. It was one of those divinations that come to excited people: one out of ten getting fulfilled and remembered, the others forgotten. We can imagine the bitterness with which she discovered that he would not ask for Huldah, nor allow her to be sent for. As to that parting speech of his—that cold-blooded, grimaced “Gedblessér,”—Ann wanted to spit at him for it.

Nevertheless, hoping feebly that the phrase might “mean something,” she very soon told Huldah of it.

“Oh!—*did* he?” the girl gasped. The color flooded her worn and weary face, making her for a moment splendidly beautiful. Then her eyes brimmed with happy tears, and she hastened away to an empty room of the hospital, like a child who has found something precious and wants to look at it alone. Presently Ann seized an opportunity to pass the door of the room and peep within. A dead man had just been carried forth, and there were stains of blood on the floor. Huldah sat on the empty cot, her pocket Bible in her lap, one small finger between the leaves, and her lips moving. Was she praying that Heaven would bless Captain

Moorcastle? People in love have done stranger and more hopeless things than that.

Huldah was thus withdrawn from earth when one of the military nurses, a ghastly man with a blood-stained bandage around his temples, entered the room in a prim, meek way, and said, "Please, Miss, could you write a letter for Private Randon?"

Huldah smiled, dashed a hand across her moistened eyes, and went wearily to her duty. The soldier guided her to a cot in one corner of a large room full of wounded. There lay John Randon, his long black hair disordered, his once brown face all of a dusky yellow, his cheeks sunken, and his lips tremulous. In his face and in his mere whisper of a voice there was the pitiful weakness of a man near unto death. Yet he had not lost his habitual expression of devout composure and resignation; and Huldah glanced at him with solemn awe while she rendered into her own English these broken phrases:

"List to me, wife, whilst I gie thee this my dyin' charge. Gie theesel to God; read th' Bible an' a' good books; be o' thim that seek ahter salvation. Heaven an' th' love o' r heavenly Feyther be th' ownly things thee 't find worthy o' a' thy thots. Strive to bring up th' young ones i' th' fear o' God. An' you, my dillings, seek to meet me i' heaven, ill worthy 's we all be t' arrive there. Th' warld aloon niver yet made no one happy. Look f' your happiness i' God through a crucified Redeemer. More would I say, but life is faint an' voice a-failen. I feel that I bein' summont swiftly awa'. Aye, I b'lieve that Jesus is bidden me coom an' abide wi' m straightwa' 'n' foriver.—Farewell, dillings; fare thee well, wife."

As Huldah wrote, her tears fell on the paper which was to be read and doubtless wept over by the lowly English widow. Now and then she dried her half-blinded eyes, and so struggled on to the end of her task. The letter was folded, addressed, and handed to the soldier nurse, who said respectfully, "Thank you, Miss."

Then dying John Randon, with the meek gratitude of a disciplined soul, whispered, "Thank you, Miss. God be good t' ye."

His eyes closed as if in sleep, looking strangely dark and hollow. A surgeon came up, bent over him, touched his wrist, and passed on to others, whom he could help. Huldah turned from that whitening face with terror, and hastened away to find her mother, like any other scared child.

By evening the girl was in such a state of febrile excitement that it was judged best to take her home. She had bursts of weeping; wandered about the house like an unhappy ghost; threw herself on her bed only to get up again; talked much of the dead John Randon. He was so good; he had gone to heaven; she should never see him again. No, indeed; she was wicked; everybody hated her; even God hated her.

"I am afraid you are going to be sick, Huldah," said her mother, and sent for Doctor Lloyd, the great physician of Boston. The doctor came, and said she was worn out; he came the next day, and said she had typhus fever; he came the day after, and said she had brain fever.

The world went on without her. The soldiers died, or survived, as if she were still at the hospital. George Washington and nearly twenty thousand other Yankees

continued to invest Boston, and General Gage continued in a meek, timid way to let him know that he did not like it.

It was a prudent, hard-shovelling, long-range defence, without a sputter of what tacticians call offensive returns. Gage built a mighty earthwork on Bunker Hill, and a line of earthworks in front of Boston Neck. He strengthened his batteries at Barton Point and on the sloppy shore of the Common. If he saw General Thomas digging around Roxbury, or General Putnam piling clods on Prospect Hill or Lechmere's Point, he bellowed at them out of all his siege-pieces and mortars. Not an oysterman's dugout could drop down the Charles River without getting a furious cast-iron reprimand. Nothing was clearer than that the old-country Excellency wanted the provincial Excellency to keep at least a mile or two away from him.

It must be understood that Gage was relatively nothing like so strong as before his victory. While the American force had increased, his own was slowly diminishing. The men were jaded with entrenching, cannonading, night-alarms, and guard-duty; they were lodged in clapboard barracks, or under rotten tents, which did not protect them from a sun far fiercer than that of their own country; they had no fresh provisions, nothing but salt pork, salt fish, beans, and hard biscuit; and, worst of all, rum was fourpence a quart. Expeditions were planned to bring sheep and cattle from the islands and coasts of the bay; but the Yankees paddled about and swept everything clean while the General and the Admiral were consulting. No wonder the morning reports showed many sick, and frequent funerals.

There was a steady loss, too, in the way of small warfare. The outworks and sentries were worried by sharpshooters, some of them half-civilized redskins of the Stockbridge tribe, who did sly murder with rifles and with bows and arrows. Retaliations in the way of cannonading and shelling were strangely ineffective. Once, indeed, a lucky bomb killed two Americans and wounded others; but another day more than a hundred were thrown into Roxbury without inflicting a scratch on man, beast, or building. The provincials became so hardened to the firing, that when a bomb fell handy, they would pick out the smoking fuse and carry off the shot to enrich their meagre arsenal.

Each side was too strongly fortified for the other to dare risk an attack. Thus all the hot season passed away; the English chief writing assiduously for provisions and re-enforcements; the American searching for powder, drilling his raw levies, and raising leagues of earthworks.

CHAPTER XXX

NOBLE CAPTAIN MOORCASTLE!

WHEN Huldah came out of her brain fever her lovely waves of blond hair were gone, and her once exquisite sea-shell complexion was woefully spotty. The first time that she caught sight of herself in a glass she turned away in horror from the white cap and checkered skin.

"Oh dear!" she gasped. "Shall I always look like that? It's somebody else; it's a fright."

A minute later she began to cry. "He won't care for me now," she sobbed. "Oh!—no he won't!—he can't!"

"There, there, there," pattered Sister Ann. "It'll all come back, your goolden hair will; and your skin will be just as bewchus as ever. Now hush up your crying whilst I run for your gruel."

Ann did not return, for she divined that the girl wanted to talk about Moorcastle, and she knew that the subject was a dangerous one. It was Mrs. Oakbridge who brought up the thin, unsavory refreshment. Huldah devoured it with the pathetic hunger of a convalescent, and almost immediately dropped away into a sleep, the dead sleep of extreme feebleness.

During the next day and the next Ann kept out of sight, and the mother had sole charge of the invalid,

a gliding, calm, silent mother, who enjoined quiet. Huldah used to look at her with large, hollow eyes which expressed a terrible curiosity. At last she burst into a passion of tears, and said in a sobbing whisper, "I know he 's dead. If he was n't you 'd talk about him."

"No, my child," said Mrs. Oakbridge, comprehending too well who was meant. "He is not dead. I saw him ride by this morning."

The hollow, spotty face, so much more touching than pretty, reddened with joy. The girl was about to ask other questions, but the mother checked her with the firm announcement, "There must be no exciting talk, Huldy. The doctor has straitly forbidden it."

On the day following Huldah sought to wheedle information about Moorcastle from Uncle Fenn. But the old gentleman pulled out his prayer-book, and read a petition for all such as were in affliction, adding somewhat concerning "our troubled country." This done, he arose panting, promised Huldah that he would bring her General Gage's last proclamation, and tottered out of the room.

Several days passed before the girl got a fair chance to catechise her sister-in-law. By this time she was fairly strong; she could sit up in bed with the aid of pillows; her hair had grown a little, or rather she tried to think so.

"I do hope it will curl as it used to," she said.
"He was always talking about my ringlets."

"Oh, it 'll be just like it was," affirmed Ann.
"Offen and offen it comes out finer for a fever."

"I know he has been here," continued Huldah.
"Has n't he ?"

Ann reddened, and looked wildly about her for an excuse to leave the room.

"Has n't he?" persisted Huldah. "I *will* know. You *shall* tell me."

She looked so fierce that Ann could not muster the wit to prevaricate, and merely stared at her in great trouble.

"What! Not once? Not once since I was sick?" Huldah moaned. All her strength departed from her; her cheeks became hollow and her lips gray. "Lay me down," she whispered. "Don't talk to me."

Doctor Lloyd was hurriedly sent for, and arrived with the smiling face of a wise physician; but when he saw the invalid his jaw dropped with a fright which he could not disguise. He stayed a long time, laboring to infuse life into this incarnation of despair; but as he was leaving the house he whispered to Mrs. Oakbridge, "It is a relapse."

Meantime where was the noble Captain Moorcastle, and what were his illustrious thoughts, and feelings, and purposes? About this time he was lounging over a mug of flip at the Swan Tavern, the other persons present being his brother aid-de-camp, Lieutenant Eastwold, and a ripe, portly, smiling gentleman whom history knows as Major Small.

"'Pon me soul, it was Old Put, I 'm sure it was,'" the Major narrated. "Why, I was within twenty yards of the breastwork, and I saw his face as plainly as I see that clock. He threw up those gun-barrels with his rapier, and said he, 'That 's my old friend, Small.' By Jove, I never made another such grateful bow in my life."

"And looked around for the bottom of the hill,"

suggested Moorcastle. "I must have been looking for it about the same time."

"Yes," laughed the jolly Major. "It was not a moment for bandying compliments. By Jove, how those fellows did shoot! I wish we could teach our men to take aim."

"We knew all about it in the Agincourt days," said Moorcastle. "But England has ceased to be a hunting country."

"Well, it 's a pretty story, that," observed Eastwold. "Old Put is a noble fellow."

"Brave to madness," affirmed Small. "And I believe he was the commander of the provincials. Some people say Warren. But what did Warren know of commanding? However, that 's no proof that he did n't try his hand at it; is it, gentlemen?"

Moorcastle smiled with his eyes merely, and the innocent Eastwold looked blank. Then they finished their flip, and Small consulted his gold watch, a ponderous affair thick enough to stop a bullet.

"I believe people never drink flip to the ladies," said Moorcastle. "Shall we order something suited to that subject?"

"What a fellow you are for the ladies!" Small laughed. "By the way, what has become of that pretty girl with the curly yellow hair? Hey, man, what has become of her?"

Eastwold's long, sandy, homely face took on an expression of grave embarrassment.

"Oh—ah," replied Moorcastle. "She is ill, I understand; very ill."

"Sorry to hear it," said Small. "Sorry—sorry."

"Well, you know, every evil has some good in it,"

continued Moorcastle. "It puts an end to something like a mess."

Eastwold reddened violently, and Small looked amazed.

"I mean it 's lucky for the girl," Moorcastle explained. "It gets her out of a mess—as well as me. Demmit, she was becoming too much of a temptation. I did n't want to be raising the doose with a colonial girl—situated as we are just now."

Small's kindly face showed a little disgust, and Eastwold rose from the table tremulous with rage. "I say, sir!" he stammered, "that 's no way for a gentleman to talk about that young lady."

Moorcastle opened his black eyes in wonder, and slightly revealed his wolfish front teeth. Then he suddenly repressed his anger, and replied in a low, tranquil tone: "See here, Mr. Eastwold. Why should there be a misunderstanding between us two? If you had any claim to call me to account on behalf of that lady, I would offer you my apologies. As it is—well, I withdraw my words—a mere supposition. If none of us repeat them, there 's no harm done."

Eastwold was too much agitated to reply otherwise than by a jerky bow. He threw down a coin with a shaking hand, and strode out of the room to hide his twitching face.

"I did n't know he was fond of her," said Moorcastle, turning to Small. "I do remember now that he used to stare at her a good deal. What a devilish queer thing a shy man is! Eastwold is welcome to the girl a thousand times over. And she 'll make him a nice wife, too, if I can keep out of her way. I am not exactly the kind of man that a woman can take ever

so many liberties with. My theory of life is to be strictly scrupulous with men, and to treat the women as comes agreeable. Still, I have been rather considerate with this girl, and I am glad she is off my hands."

"I hope she won't die," said Small, looking askant at Moorcastle, as though he liked him less for every word he uttered.

"I'll leave her to Eastwold," added the Captain. "That ends the imbroglio happily all round. It would be a good subject for a play."

The Major wanted to say to him, "Curse you, sir, I wish you knew, sir, what a cursed hard-hearted brute you are."

But it was not his daughter who had been trifled with and made miserable for the young fellow's amusement. He paid for his flip, refused rather sulkily to take another mug with Moorcastle, and tramped off to his quarters without saying good evening.

Weeks later (the siege of Boston languishing on meanwhile without notable incident) Huldah was again on the road upward from the edge of the grave. This time, during all her earlier convalescence, she did not breathe one query concerning Moorcastle. Apparently she had accepted the inevitable and resolved to say no more of it. But it was also apparent that she sometimes wondered at her own composure.

"I don't see why you call me Huldah Oakbridge," she said to Sister Ann. "I ought to have another name; I am somebody else."

At another time she asked, "What can a girl live for, after she has been turned into stone?"

Ann stared at her with such an expression as Elijah's simple companion may have worn when he saw the

prophet taking flight in his chariot of fire. But her sober second thought was not favorable; here was a flightiness of speech which ought to be checked.

"What igspressions!" she said, glumly, and proceeded to administer some chicken broth.

Huldah became more like herself, or at least she regained somewhat of her cheerfulness, as soon as she was able to sit at the window. What a joy it is to the arisen sick one to gaze once more upon the bright outer world and the wholesome life of it! Boston, the forlorn little town, appeared wonderfully stirring to the feeble girl, and diverted her by the hour together. She was so glad to see the human race again that she smiled like a baby in the faces of unknown passers-by who chanced to look up at her. Only, the sight of a redcoat always brought a tremor of anguish into her eyes; and once, when a showy young officer cantered past, she dropped back in her chair, ghastly white. Ann Oakbridge, who chanced to be with her, did not need to peer after the horseman to know who he was.

Of course the time came when Huldah could look at Moorcastle and speak of him. "There he goes," she said once. "He did n't turn his eyes; he never does. He behaves as though he had murdered somebody in this house."

It was of course Sister Ann who was with her; the girl would not have been so frank with her mother.

"He was in the battle," she resumed presently.
"Did he get hurt?"

"Have you lost your mem'ry?" said Ann. "You know he did n't get hurt."

"Oh, I remember well enough. I remember just

how he looked when he rode by. Was n't I glad to see him alive and sound!"

" You must n't jabber so much," snapped Ann, meaning that she must not talk of Moorcastle.

But the next day Huldah abruptly resumed the subject. " It is all over," she said. " I never shall be a countess. What a dream it was! what a silly, crazy dream! It would have been pleasant to die dreaming it."

" He 's hateful," cried the downright British woman, her heart swelling with rage over the vanishing of the coroneted vision. " I piffeckly hate such conduck as hisn. I 'd just like to see somebody give him a wack on the jor."

" Oh, don't say so! I know you love me. But you must n't hate him; I can't bear it. Why, you seem to feel it worse than I do. But we were both silly. How could I expect—a poor little Boston girl—nothing but a provincial!—I ought not to have thought of his caring for me. Why, Ann, are you crying? crying for me? Come here. I want to kiss you."

They kissed each other and cried together for a minute before Ann recollected that Huldah was a convalescent.

" There," she whispered, pulling away. " You must n't. I must n't let you. You will have another relapse."

" Oh, it does n't matter," Huldah sighed. " Except to mother and father. How good mother has been! And I have been so spiteful and disobedient! My days won't be long in the land. I wish you 'd bring me my looking-glass, Ann. No! I don't want it, either; not now. Wait till I get over this crying. I

look so spotty when I 've been crying." A minute later she sighed once more, " No, my days won't be long in the land."

Yet she lived on just as if she had been always dutiful; and she steadily regained her health and her girlish prettiness. The corn-colored ringlets came back, perhaps a little darker than before, but abundant and bewitching. The sparkles returned to the violet eyes, and the carnelian to cheeks and mouth. But the soul was not as aforetime; she continued to dwell upon her disappointment; nor did she ever speak of it with her native spirit of self-assertion; she had been crushed beyond vindictiveness or even complaint.

" Oh!" Ann once protested, in a kind of bawl, " how ever can you stick to that heejus man so? I wish to the Lud I 'd never got him to this house."

" Ah," returned Huldah dreamily, " I 'm *s-o* glad you did!"

It was difficult to forgive such forgivingness. The manly daughter of Highgate, obviously capable of hitting out with her fist in revenge for a harm, looked as vexed as she could look with the creature whom she loved best in the world.

" Lud!" she sputtered. " I knew women could be fools. But you are just the head jobbernowl of 'em all."

" Wait till you are in love," said Huldah, smiling faintly.

Mrs. Oakbridge, junior, winced with a promptitude which did credit to her intellect. " Now!" she protested. " What did you say *that* for? I am fond of John. But all the same, if he should treat me as though I had no feelinks, I 'd hate him for it."

" You don't know," said Huldah, who had grown sadly wise. " I used to brag that way. What has it come to? Now, if he should tell me to clean his boots, I suppose I should do it."

" I wish he had to clean yourn," sobbed Ann, her pale-blue eyes swimming with tears of wrathful affection. " He ain't fit to be your meanest suvvant—not your very errint-boy, he ain't. If the man only knew what he 's throwed away, he 'd suffer—if he 's got the vitals to suffer—'ard-'earted beast! Well, there 's one comfort; he 'll get no such other girl as you, never; not in all old England, he won't, though I 'm a Lunnuner as says it. I don't believe no English girl, whether of high buth or low buth, would put up with his nawsty, musnary conduck as 'eavenly mindedly as you do."

It must be charitably remembered that Sister Ann spoke in wrath, and also that she judged her country-women from the Highgate point of view.

CHAPTER XXXI

HULDAH AMONG GRANDEES

TIME and the fresh breezes of autumn restored Huldah to vigorous health.

By now her father had returned from his voyage to the old country, escaping the Continental cruisers and Yankee privateers which already infested the seas, and unlading at Hancock's Wharf valuable cargoes of provisions.

The venture brought him money,—a great deal of money for those days of impoverishment,—so that he suddenly became one of the solid men of Boston. Moreover, it brought him favor at governmental headquarters, and even with the bitter Tory element of civilian society. The result was that the Oakbridges were ere long on visiting terms with the Hutchinsons, the Olivers, the Lorings, and the Ruggleses, and even with the resident English notables and honorables.

This is how it happened that, some time in early October, Huldah and Sister Ann attended a reception at the Province House. General Gage was already under orders to go to England and favor His Majesty with counsels concerning American affairs. But nobody understood that he was to be superseded and would nevermore rule in Boston; he was still Excellency, Governor of Massachusetts, and Commander-in-

Chief of the British forces in North America. It was a dizzying honor to rustle into his farewell reception, and our two young adventurers in the ways of fashion so understood it, deporting themselves with that palpitating composure which distinguishes their sex.

One of the first persons whom Huldah encountered was Moorcastle. It must have been a trying moment, not only for the resurrected girl, but also for the assassin of her peace. They had been very intimate, not to say loving; and now they were separated by something like a grave. What can a murderer, who calls himself a perfect gentleman, say to the uncomplaining ghost of his victim? What can a meek, forgiving, sorrowing ghost say to its murderer?

There was a mechanical interchange of greetings between two bodies whose souls would have been glad to be leagues asunder. Moorcastle, redder in the face than he was proud to be, swung his laced hat behind his right thigh, and obsequiously bent his bagged and powdered head, almost wishing that the girl would cuff it. Huldah, as white as the shrouded dead, drooped her lovely eyes as though looking her last on earth, and courtesied till she thought she should never rise again. Then, without a word spoken, they got past each other somehow, and were glad of the deliverance.

"By Jove, Moork!" muttered Captain Tollemache. "I don't see how you could have let that girl go."

"Demmit, it 's too late now," said Moorcastle, anxious to get rid of the subject. "Eastwold is there all the while, and he means *une affaire serieuse*."

"Oh, he does, eh? Well, I 'll wait till she 's married, and then I 'll try my luck."

Moorcastle turned upon Tollemache with a tragic

start and a savage expression. He was in such a state of mind about Huldah that, while he was quite disposed to trifle with her himself, it made him angry to hear another fellow merely talk of so doing. He wanted to tell Tollemache to go to perdition; but, realizing in a moment how childish his wrath was, he sauntered away without speaking; though he revenged himself later in the evening by being uncommonly gallant with Mrs. Tollemache.

Meantime Sister Ann was aiding Huldah to recover her self-possession.

"Your gown is all out of plait behind," she whispered, knowing that such like information would restore the girl's reason, if anything could.

So they withdrew to a dressing-room; there was a pretence of putting the skirt to rights, and Huldah drank a glass of water; then she was once more ready to face man or woman. It was an effort of heroism not so very far below the rallies of the British infantry on the bloody slope of Breed's Hill.

In five minutes after the meeting with Moorcastle Huldah was smiling and prattling as cantily as any other woman present. Major Small, who had witnessed and comprehended that meeting, likened her in his mind to a soldier who has received his bullet, but fights on without flinching. He got Eastwold to present him to her, and did his middle-aged best to be agreeable. When he left her, he elbowed his way up to Gage, and mumbled in his Excellency's red, hairy ears a few words which were responded to by three or four nods and a smile. The result was that in due time Huldah danced a minuet with the high-born commander-in-chief. Then Major Small took her out,

and then other notable gentlemen, until it became obvious to everybody that she was one of the belles of the ball.

Sister Ann gazed at these unexpected triumphs with such a fixed smirk of honest satisfaction that it seemed as if she would go on smiling eternally like Boodha. Nothing marred her content but the fact that Captain Moorcastle looked on with high-bred and hard-hearted unconcern. She would have rejoiced to empty a tumbler of rum punch on his powdered head and gilt-laced uniform. Meantime she talked and laughed, and eventually danced, with Eastwold, doing all three more vigorously than he liked. The lovelorn Lieutenant had to swallow a vast deal of Ann that evening to get a tiny bit of Huldah. But how grateful he was to His Excellency for taking the girl out, and to that fatherly old Small for being so thoughtful of her! Not often in his shy life had the soft-hearted youth passed so gladsome an evening.

Of course Huldah did not entirely escape the shafts of jealousy. Miss Oliver, a heavy young woman, with sandy eyebrows and a bulbous Roman nose, gave her one of those icy stares which still haunt Beacon Hill. Miss Brown, a short brunette, with a large cranium and glittering eyes, simpered to her, "I have heard so much about you from my friend, Captain Moorcastle!"

Even Mrs. Yerksum, a life-long crony of Uncle Fenn, could not help saying, "I wonder your father is n't here; but I suppose he could n't leave the store."

In short, Huldah bumped up against several cases of human nature during the evening, just as though she were at a modern party.

But she heard one kind of talk which is now some-

what out of date, though there is still a sufficiency of it. Everybody present, at least all those in citizen raiment, spoke bitterly and scornfully of America and Americans, excepting of course their flunkeyish selves. A handsome married lady (obviously a great favorite with a certain British general) sat down to the harpsichord and sang a ditty which she said had been composed by a "gentleman of the garrison."

" Father 'n' I went down to camp
Along with Captain Goodin ;
An' there we saw the men 'n' boys
As thick as hasty puddin'.

" There was Captain Washington
Upon a slapping stallion,
A giving orders to his men,—
I guess there was a million."

And the rest of it: they made her scream the whole fifteen verses; a song written expressly to heap scorn upon Americans; they encored it, and they laughed till they cried. General Howe himself (demi-semi-Guelph as he was) did not applaud so fervently as the loyal native sons and daughters of Boston. Yankee Huldah Oakbridge giggled herself redder in the face than Britannic Sister Ann. A dozen other heiresses (they are living yet, my readers) paid their court to Anglican epaulets and coronets with similar mirth. There was not one of these sycophants, male, or female, or clerical, who did not hope that the Englishry present saw how deeply he, or she, or it was gratified, and how fervently he, or she, or it flouted at George Washington, and his army, and the whole breed from which

they sprang. If Ash Farnlee could have been there, he would have felt a longing to throttle the entire company, beginning with the native windpipes.

The conversation became all the more Torified for the singing. Over and over Huldah heard such phrases as, "loyalty to the best of kings"; "hang Pitt and Sam Adams together"; "we want as many hangmen as soldiers"; "long live George the Third!"

There was much talk of Arnold's expedition against Canada, which had left Cambridge some three weeks before, and had already vanished into the wilds of Maine.

"They never can reach Quebec by way of the Kennebec," affirmed Mr. Brown, a swarthy, stout man with baggy eyes. "It's the horriblest wilderness in North America. Hannibal would not be able to traverse it. And this Arnold—whom I know well in his business relations—is just the fellow to sell out his command, if General Carleton will buy of him."

But the most fervent dialogue referred to the coming departure of Gage for England. How could Boston spare him, even for a few weeks! What a splendid proclamation he had just issued to those crazy rebels! Judge Oliver and young Mr. Hutchinson vied with each other in repeating some of its phrases loud enough for His Excellency to hear. "Infatuated multitude;—deceived and betrayed by ambitious men;—taking arms upon grievances which existed only in the imagination;—fighting against the most liberal and lenient of governments."

Thus went the duet, and as little Judge Oliver had a shrill, parrot-like pipe, and Hutchinson had a monotonous, grinding voice like the utterance of a coffee-

mill, the responses produced a very humorous effect, though nobody dared to smile.

When this service of praise ended, Huldah distinguished the mellow baritone of a tall, handsome man, the husband of the beauty who had sung *Yankee Doodle*. He, too, was eulogizing the departing General: "Such prudence, benevolence, and candor in civil affairs! Such steadiness, vigilance, and humanity in his military career! Everything he says and does fills me with veneration."

"Of course you admire his late appointment," sneered a lean, slovenly gentleman, whose wiry, red hair showed through insufficient powder and pomatum, like a single gold piece through the meshes of a ragged purse.

"What one?" demanded the tall man, with a frown.

"The one making you sole auctioneer and vendue-master for the city of Boston. A pretty profitable office, considering the number of houses on sale for unpaid taxes. I congratulate you."

The red-head sought to smile with bland irony, but the smile turned into a grin of mental anguish, and he hasted away to hide a piteous spasm of the mouth.

"That's a malignant," baritoned the tall gentleman.
"Mark my words, that man will turn out a rebel."

"Oh Lud, no!" piped Judge Oliver. "He applied for the place himself. Get the poor fellow some little post, my dear sir. You can make him your friend and a most devoted loyal subject."

"I have not so much influence as you suppose," grunted the tall gentleman, and stalked off with an air of offence.

The bystanders exchanged smiles, glanced sidelong at the corner where the musical lady was chatting with a certain British general, and then pulled discreetly grave faces.

Meantime puffy Mrs. Oliver was discoursing graciously to Huldah Oakbridge. "I am so rejoiced," she wheezed, "that your father got in safe with his brigantines. What a mercy of Heaven to bring him through the toils of those pirates outside! It looks like a direct answer to the prayers of our loyal clergy. And we were in great straits, surely. Salt beef fifteen pence a pound! It takes one's breath away to think of it. No doubt your father made a handsome penny by his voyage. But the Judge says he deserves it; he says your father put his whole fortune at risk, and righteously earned his profit; the Judge is always saying some reasonable thing like that, when most people are so inconsiderate and uncharitable. So I look upon your father as a most worthy man who has been a friend in need to us all. Do make my respects to him, and tell him Boston thanks him."

By Boston, she of course meant the Tory aristocracy, such as the Hutchinsons, Olivers, Browns, etc. Huldah perceived that she was being talked to by the old grandee as an outsider to this sacred circle. But she did not take it ill; she was conscious, like everybody else in those days, of the superiority of gentry to plain people; and she was pleased to be spoken to by gentry in almost any fashion. She was trying to invent some response more substantial than simpering, when Mrs. Oliver recommenced her bland twaddle, pouring forth the phrases in a continuous smooth current, like a cask of oil with the spigot out. If ever

she lacked a word, or an idea, she uttered a soft giggle by way of a conjunction.

"But what a state we are in, my child!" she monotoned. "Starvation within and enemies without! Pirates by sea and savages by land! Are we never to be ridded of that Mr. Washington and his impudent, bloodthirsty gang? I am so surprised every morning to find that the General has not marched out upon them and dispersed them with the bayonet. Surely the king's troops ought to dispose very easily of such a miserable, disorderly rabble. The Judge says it is a difficult matter to capture entrenchments. But surely we took those on Charlestown Neck. Why don't you urge some of these valiant gentlemen to make a sally? You seem to be on flattering terms with them, from His Excellency down. You could use your charms, you know. Now I have n't any left to use. But a fresh, rosy lass like you could surely inspirit some of these noble warriors to battle. And here comes one; I'll call him up to you. Captain Moorcastle!"

But Moorcastle, pretending not to hear, slipped adroitly past; and Huldah, throwing a ghastly smile at Mrs. Oliver, courtesied and tottered away. She had a dreadful feeling that, if she should meet her false lover face to face, she would fling herself into his arms and faint there. It was a great relief to her to discover Eastwold, and to find that he was ready and willing to escort her home.

The lovelorn lieutenant had plenty of opportunity to pay court to Huldah. Moorcastle did not go to England with General Gage, but neither did he ever go to the Oakbridge house. And for month after

month the girl remained caged in Boston by a siege which had fallen as torpid as the siege of Troy before Achilles quarrelled with Agamemnon.

Howe succeeded Gage, but it was his only success. Apparently he had resolved never to go near a Yankee earthwork again so long as he had mind and memory enough to say Bunker Hill. He would not even seize upon Dorchester Heights, though he knew that if the Yankees should occupy them, he would have to leave Boston. From October 10, 1775, on to May 17, 1776, his only military operation was the sending of a battalion to Lechmere's Point, with the result of losing three prisoners and capturing ten cows.

Meantime Washington, with nine rounds of cartridges per man and almost without cannon, perseveringly circumvallated Howe, marking out and completing a crescent front eight miles long, which showed some twenty miles of parapet. Julius Cæsar, or any of the Grand Turks, or Alexander of Parma, would have surveyed it with astonishment and approbation. Sir William meanwhile behaved like a man whose wits had been palsied. When the rebels threw up a new work, he made an official report of it to the War Office, and issued orders for his soldiers to clean their gaiters and re-trim their hats.

But Washington's greatest feat before Boston was the complete reconstruction of his army. The time of the Connecticut and Rhode Island militia expired December 1st, and that of the Massachusetts militia a month later. There was danger that, on the 1st of January, 1776, the twenty miles of parapet would be without defenders. The warlike zeal of New England saved the provincial cause; at no time did the army

fall below ten thousand six hundred men for duty; and by March it had risen to nearly sixteen thousand, besides twenty-eight hundred sick.

But what a labor for the commander-in-chief to keep a working amount of organization and soldierly vitality in this ebbing and flowing swarm of greenhorns! "Nothing like it," he said and wrote, "was ever before required of a general, namely to hold a post, without powder, for six months against a strong enemy, and meanwhile to disband one army and raise another."

"If we were only worthy to serve under him!" sighed Ash Farnlee. And thereupon the fervent youth applied to Adjutant-General Horatio Gates for leave to undertake a desperate job of secret service.

CHAPTER XXXII

LOVELY MRS. LORELEIGH

THE departure of General Gage (which he, poor hero, thought such an important event) did not affect even the existence of little Huldah Oakbridge.

Moorcastle and Eastwold both remained on the staff of the new Excellency; so that she had a false lover and a true lover always handy; and what more can a girl want? Yet she was not happy. The devotion of the true lover could not make amends for the treason of the false lover. She was constantly saying, during this joyless, fashionable winter, "If I ever marry."

"In course you 'll marry," snapped Sister Ann. "A girl just beginning to get into society and have chances! The idear of making a frumpsy old maid of yourself!"

"Well, just to please you, I 'll have Mr. Eastwold. He 's real good, and gentlemanly, and devoted; and he would be almost handsome, if he only had a chin."

"Oh, wait! Now don't you skip off in a silly hurry with Eastwold. He 's just nothing but a good-earted young Englishman; there 's thousan's an' thousan's more igsackly like him. He don't belong to the peeritch, and never will."

"Nor I never will, either. I wish I had never thought of it. I 'd better have stuck to Ash Farnlee."

"No! Don't you go to think of it. Take Eastwold sooner; anyhow, he's from the old country, and he's a British officer; and that's ever so much above a provincial, no matter who he be."

"I shan't love him. I shan't be happy with him. I shall never care for anybody but Captain Moorcastle. - I don't care tuppence for these other men who are about me."

"Don't I see it? You are just a-using of 'em to get *him* back. But you ain't always judicious. You go with everybody, or anybody, a little too free-like. You refuse Mr. Eastwold, and then you 'ave 'im 'ere igsackly the same, and go to parties and theatre with 'im. And you run with Captain Tollemache, too, who's a married man, with children, and the wust-spoken-of gen'leman in the garrison. Of course it's all to make Moorksle jealous. But suppose it simply makes him scawnful?"

"There's one thing I know hurts me. I ain't in the right church to please officers. Mrs. Yerksum and Mrs. Oliver have both said to me as how I ought to join the Church of England if I wanted to bag the epaulets."

"Of course that's their church—by act of Parliament. Well now, what shall I say? Of course your parents would feel awfully; they'd consider it nex' thing to turning papisher. But Uncle Fenn 'll stan' by you with all the scripter he's got in his jor, poor old pusson. Would n't he like the job of marrying you, in the Church of England service, to a British officer! Ho! would n't he!"

But if Huldah was to attend the garrison church, she must first learn how to make her responses, and so

she begged her uncle to lend her his prayer-book. The delighted ecclesiastic favored her with a spare one which had been presented to him years before by a widowed parishioner who wished to comfort him for the loss of his wife, and failed. Huldah studied it in secret, meanwhile hiding it in safe places, as she would have hidden a novel by Smollet or Fielding, supposing she could have got such a horror. But at last it was discovered, and then came a quarrel in the puritan dwelling.

"I am going to the Episcopal Church," explained and declared Huldah, in wild agitation and anguish of spirit.

"You are going to church with your father and mother," calmly returned Mrs. Oakbridge. "At least, you will do so until you are married, or of age."

Huldah was pitiable, although she deserved slapping. She had never before rebelled openly against her parents, and the struggle was torture to her. Her mouth twisted and her eyes were full of tears as she cried out in a breaking voice, "Do you want to plague me to death!"

"Huldah!" exclaimed Mrs. Oakbridge in sorrowful amazement.

But Huldah gasped back, "You want to kill me!" and fled upstairs to her room.

Her father, who had sat thus far in speechless stupefaction, now arose, looked up his rawhide riding-whip, and strode after his wayward child.

"Jehiel!" cried his wife. "You are surely not going to whip her! She is nineteen years old."

"She ain't too old to be sassy to her mother. She'll either take a hiding, or she'll ask your pardon."

The leathery castigation was spared to Huldah. When she saw her father enter her chamber with his cowskin, she was very glad to descend promptly to the sitting-room and say what was ordered. But had she been one year younger, she would surely have got a tanning. If there was no sufficient discipline in the American army, there was still a wholesome allowance of it in the American family, and not for younkers only, but for their sisters as well. No wonder our great-grandmothers married early, and made good wives, if it were merely to get out of range of the paternal flagellations.

Huldah took no further steps towards changing her place of devotion, and made no public complaint of her narrow escape from physical correction. But the story of the cowskin scene became widely known in some manner. Did Uncle Fenn partially overhear it, and get an inaccurate comprehension of it, and impart his misunderstanding to others? It is certain that his good friend, Mrs. Yerksum, a devoted and even heated churchwoman, spread abroad an extravagant version of the affair, giving it a color of persecution for religion's sake.

Among Mrs. Yerksum's entertained listeners was Mrs. Latimer Loreleigh, the handsomest married lady in Boston and the belle of its Tory society.

"He was going to cowhide her?" giggled Mrs. Loreleigh, who had noticed Huldah's advent into her stylish circle, and thought she had no business there. "Well, why did n't he? What hindered? Tell me the rest of it."

"Dear Mistress Loreleigh! how can you laugh! Such a dreadful piece of persecution! when the poor

dear child merely wanted to join our church and have done with that wretched rebel meeting-house! I am *so* glad it has been turned into a riding-school for the cavalry!"

"It must be she is after an English officer," mused Mrs. Loreleigh, who perhaps knew her own sex, or the lighter part of it. "Is n't she running with Mr. Eastwold a good deal?"

"But some people say one thing, and some another; now it's Mr. Eastwold, and now it is n't;—just like the pea under the thimble."

"Oh, I know what it means," resumed Mrs. Loreleigh, bursting into another giggle. "She used to frolic with my naughty pet, Captain Moorcastle; and something or other happened, I never knew what. You may depend she has set out to get him back."

Mrs. Yerksum reddened with a struggle between squeamishness and a desire to narrate a bit of gossip. "Yes," she hesitated; "there was something betwixt her and the Captain"; and before she knew what was happening, she had told Huldah's love story.

"Yes, that's it," Mrs. Loreleigh continued to giggle. "He threw her overboard; he tired of her and turned her over to Eastwold; and now she is figuring to hook him again. Why, don't you see it yourself, Mrs. Yerksum? I know you do; you need n't pull that long face; you can hardly keep from laughing outright. What a superior joke on Captain Moorcastle!"

"But you won't mention it, dear Mrs. Loreleigh? One really ought to try to give the girl credit for high and serious motives. Please don't speak of it to the young gentlemen of the garrison. They are so merciless upon our colonial girls!"

"What do you take me for? Do you suppose I am intimate with all the ensigns in Boston?"

A day or two later Moorcastle called at the Loreleighs', and was received by the lady of the mansion with one of her silvery giggles, the most fascinating noise of merriment that ever bubbled over coral lips, a joyous tinkle that a man might walk a league to hear.

"Well, what now?" smilingly demanded the Captain, for everybody laughed with Mrs. Loreleigh. But at the same time he looked a little anxious, for she was a tease who could take the skin off from those who liked her, and he liked her more than he would have cared to tell Mr. Latimer Loreleigh.

"Oh, what a monster!" she began. "Oh, what a hard-hearted, mischievous creature! Sit down, and get out your handkerchief, and cry a while. Then I'll tell you what to do next."

"It's so long since I've cried," said the Captain. "However, I'll sit down, since you are so good. Let me place a footstool for your lovely slippers."

"It's about that poor little Oakbridge thing," continued Mrs. Loreleigh, tittering from her slippers to her kinkled auburn hair.

"Oh now, quit that," pleaded Moorcastle. "Demme—beg pardon, Mistress Loreleigh—but I don't want to hear."

"I should think you would n't. Nobody except Beelzebub likes to hear the ugly results of his own misdoings." And Mrs. Loreleigh laughed, and colored, and showed her white teeth till she was altogether dazzling, as well as smartly provoking.

"Oh, well—let 's have it," he grumbled. "You may as well kill a man outright as scare him to death."

So she told the story in her own way. He had taken advantage of his cloth and his gentility to bewitch a mere innocent; he had driven the sensitive little thing into a fit of illness and a state of melancholy; she had sought after consolation in the services of the Church; and her Roundhead of a father had cow-hid her. It was an affair which would surely make talk in Boston and rouse a feeling among the citizens against the garrison.

It must be understood, incredible as the fact may seem, that Moorcastle was already a little sore on the subject of Huldah. He perfectly comprehended that Gage and Small and other notable people had been specially polite to her because they believed that he had treated her shabbily and spoken of her unhandsomely. Armored as he was with arrogance, egotism, and evil experiences, he had perforce felt uncomfortable under this outranking disapprobation, as even a tortoise may become restless when a sufficient coal of fire is laid on his scaly back. So he swallowed the whole of Mrs. Loreleigh's humorous exaggeration, and fell to excusing himself as if he had been seriously incriminated, so easily may even a veteran rake be mystified by a clever woman.

"Now Mistress Loreleigh!" he protested. "It's really too bad to lay all this brabble and brangle to me."

"Ah, you have a sore conscience," she replied, delighted to see that he believed her inventions.

"No! 'pon honor now! I say no! Oh, I know that some people—Gage, for instance, and old Small—thought I behaved badly to the girl—thought I ought to offer. But how the doose could I do that,

I want to know ? If her father had a plum to settle on her, it would be a horse of another breed. But you know my state and circumstances, I suppose ;—a top-lofty name to keep up, and three hundred a year to keep it on. Of course there are possibilities; and that 's just what plays the doose with me; that 's what gets me into these hobbles. But suppose my cousin marries and has a young earl ? Then I must get an heiress for a wife, or go without a wife. That 's why I turned a short corner and dodged this little girl as soon as I found out for certain that she meant *une affaire serieuse*. I swear to you, Mistress Loreleigh, I took the first cut out. I gave way like a gentleman to Eastwold, who has more guineas than I have, thrice over, and wants her like a dog. And she won't have him; refuses him every time he comes to the scratch; breaks the poor beggar's heart. He 's outright desperate; tells the whole garrison how he loves her; cries publicly in his beer. By Jove, it makes a fellow want to shoot him to put him out of his misery."

Mrs. Loreleigh had suddenly become grave. The story of a serious disappointment in love could hardly fail to touch a woman, however sportive she might be in temperament and however seared by coquetry.

"Shooting *him* would n't end it," she said. "You would still have to shoot *her*."

" My simplest way out would be to shoot myself."

" Oh, that would be getting off too easy," she smiled. " Besides, you have n't the slightest notion of meaning it. Don't be such an impostor."

He winced and flushed under the merely jocose application of the ugly name.

" Come!" she resumed, more than half in earnest

for the moment. "Be merciful to the child. Run and propose while your heart is soft."

"Merciful? Why should I shoulder all the compassion? Let her be merciful to Eastwold. After that I'll take my turn."

"Oh, you dreadful man! For shame on you!"

"No, no! You misunderstand me now, 'pon honor, Mistress Loreleigh. You are just a bit too ready to put a bad construction on a fellow's stammering and stuttering."

Mrs. Loreleigh changed her attack; for she was seriously attacking him now; she had suddenly become Hulda's champion. It seemed to her that it would be noble to surrender one of her danglers to a poor girl who was interesting enough to be wildly in love.

"And the child is such a loyal little soul!" she went on. "They say she has brought over her whole family to the king. And here you treat her as cruelly as if you were an aid-de-camp of Old Put."

"Oh, come now, Mistress Loreleigh! Don't make a political matter of this and have me hung for high-treason."

"And you are such a short-sighted traitor, too! so blind to your own interests! Here you have a chance to get a loving, submissive, devoted wife, a rose not to be found on every bush, let me tell you. Come; do the wisest thing you can; do a splendid thing for once; see how it feels!"

"The devil! How like the doose you are shaking me up!"

"Faugh! don't swear! I don't allow that here to anybody below the commander-in-chief."

Moorcastle looked more nettled, and more alarmed

also, than one could easily imagine of so cool a head and so arrogant a soul, unless one knows by experience that eternal terror of superiors which weighs upon everybody in the army. He really was fearful lest this capricious and domineering creature should set the commander-in-chief against him about something or other. He began to plead his case in downright earnest.

"Oh, shake away," he said, recurring to his simile of a terrier and a rat. "I won't deny but what I deserve it enough; if I don't now, I dare say I shall another time. There is just the trouble, Mistress Loreleigh. What you demand of me is not the best thing for the young lady. Likely enough she might be loving and constant; but should I be so in return? What sort of a life should I lead her? I want plums of money. I want horses and cards and—other things. I don't believe I could give them up for the best wife in the world, especially if I took her merely out of compassion and to please other people. And then I am not what they call a good fellow; I have the doose's own temper, Mistress Loreleigh. What you advise would be Satan's particular luck for the young lady herself."

The right honorable young gentleman appreciated himself exactly; he would have been a dreadful husband, even throwing in the possible coronet. The misery of the case was that poor Huldah could not divine this, and would not have believed the Angel of Witness if he had flown from Heaven to tell her of it.

But Mrs. Loreleigh was woman of the world enough, and was familiar enough with bad young fellows, to see that Moorcastle's statement was correct. More-

over, her spirit of championship for an abused sister was placated by the fact that the Captain had humbled himself to her and had in a manner pleaded for her belleship's forgiveness.

"I suppose you are right," she said. "More's the pity, for the girl's sake and yours. Of course she would rather have you break her heart in her way; but I see that you had better break it in your own. She must put up with Hobson's choice. Ah, dear! that is generally the only choice left to us poor women."

"If you had less of a choice, Mistress Loreleigh, the others would have more," the Captain murmured with a leer of gallantry.

"Now don't be personal," returned madame, rather tartly. "I permit that only to major-generals. And, see here; if you are deserting Huldah Oakbridge to court *me*, you may just trot back to her."

"Beg pardon," bowed Moorcastle, who was getting more and more smitten with the domineering lady.

"Granted—on one condition," she said. "I shall tell everybody that this girl refused you, and you shall not deny it."

The prospective heir of an earldom nodded assent, and the remainder of his call was made agreeable to him.

CHAPTER XXXIII

MATCHMAKING

A BOUT these times Huldah's friends began to note that she had got into a dreamy way, brooding tranquilly by the half-hour together if they did not disturb her, the violet eyes fixed on vacancy as aimlessly as the eyes of an infant. There seemed to be nothing unhappy in her reveries; on the contrary, a sweet smile sometimes stole to the lips; the expression of the eyes, too, was gentle and tender.

"She 'pears to be getting over her disappointment some," whispered Jehiel Oakbridge to his wife.

The mother glanced at the girl with an unconscious scowl of disapproval or anxiety, and then spoke out sharply, as one speaks to a sleeper who has no right to sleep: "Huldah! Get up out of that chair. Take your broom and sweep the bedrooms."

Again and again, whenever she caught the girl in a day-dream, she roused her in this tart fashion, sometimes pushing her by the shoulder.

"What makes you so harsh with her?" gently protested Oakbridge.

"I wish she was married and off my hands," said the mother.

A day or two later Oakbridge came in from the store at an unusual hour, and confided to his wife the state-

ment that the Old Harry himself seemed to be after Huldah.

"What 's the matter now ?" she demanded with the emphasis of nervous irritation.

"Why, John says that Ann tells him that Huldy told her that somebody is a-following her; that is, following Huldy. It 's an officer."

"Following Huldy ? An officer ? Why, it 's that Mr. Eastwold; we know all about it. I hope it ain't Captain Tollemache."

"No, it ain't either of 'em; it 's somebody Huldy don't know; she hain't fairly seen his face yet. But he follows her into alleys, and makes love to her, and hints about marriage."

"Why has n't she told *me* !" exclaimed the mother.
"I 'll speak to her about it at once."

But Huldah was out, having gone with Sister Ann to call on Mrs. Loreleigh, at whose house a dialogue took place which seems not unworthy of record. Mrs. Oliver was there, her short and tremulous and jellified figure done up in flowered satin, and her round, pulpy, pink face shaking with laughter, as she listened to the silvery prattle of the hostess tinkling through a tale of garrison scandal. The grand dame (wife of the chief-justice of the province, remember) smiled upon Huldah with the kindness of an old lady towards the girl who has the sort of beauty which she herself had in youth.

"Here comes our kitten," she said in her high-soprano voice, which bubbled so feebly to the surface of her fat.

"The officer-killer," added Mrs. Loreleigh, giving Huldah a kiss and Sister Ann a nod.

"Ah, yes, the poor captain; and the rest of them!"

giggled Mrs. Oliver, who had already heard from Mrs. Loreleigh the tale which Moorcastle had consented to her telling.

Huldah flushed and opened her eyes wide; but the hostess gave her no time to get flurried. "What a lovely gown!" she warbled, taking hold of the girl's skirt. "We must have that at the play to-night. I want the audience to be superb."

"But, oh!" sighed Mrs. Oliver. "What a notion to have such gayeties now! I do think it is no time for dear General Burgoyne to be arranging dramatic entertainments. Not that a play will dishonor Faneuil Hall, as some of our poor rebel neighbors declare. I am sure the naughtiest comedy that ever was written can't be half so wicked and immoral as what the Hall has listened to in the way of treasonable resolutions and orations. But I do object, dear Mistress Loreleigh, to all levities in a town situated as Boston is. Why, my dear (turning to Huldah) we have already eaten up the provision your father brought us, if one can judge by the prices. Just think—to say nothing of the cannonading and night-alarms—just think of salt beef at fifteen pence the pound! And vegetables?" (Here she faced round upon Sister Ann, complimenting them all, by turn, with a remark, after the manner of polite old grandes.) "Why! no vegetables at any price; no flour, whether wheat, rye, or Injun; scarcely beans for our Sunday dinners. And the military magazines so bare that good, dear General Howe dares n't give out a day's rations to our starving poor! No fuel, and bitter winter full upon us, so that people are starving for food and fire at once."

"There should n't be any lack of fuel," said Mrs.

Loreleigh, who, like Mrs. Oliver, had forgotten the opening topic of the colloquy, so interesting was the tale of expensive markets and public scarcity. "There are plenty of houses of rebels. Why not use them for firewood?"

"Oh, mem, they are going fast enough," Mrs. John Oakbridge stated. "Why, as we came along we sor a house——"

"Yes, indeed!" interrupted Dame Oliver, forgetting her diplomatic manners. "I should think half the army was on command knocking houses to pieces and carting them off to the barracks. Such sights as the poor soldiers are, in their work-a-day uniforms, all dust and lime and soot! It's a relief to think that their mothers can't see them in such a state. But, after all said and done, it is we who have most occasion to weep, beholding our poor dear old Boston going to slivers under our eyes, and our fellow-citizens shipped off to the mainland to beg. Why, Mistress Loreleigh, three hundred old men and women and children were landed at Chelsea yesterday, without a mouthful of victual. And the housebreaking and plundering, too! Scarcely a day passes but somebody's place is stripped. I look under the bed every night for tramps and jailbirds and grenadiers and marines and Loyal Americans. Ruggles' Regulators were saints and cherubs of light compared with the sons of Belial who trouble us now. It does seem to me that our dear, excellent commander——"

"Oh, he does all he can," broke in Mrs. Loreleigh, pettishly. "The criminals are getting three hundred, four hundred, five hundred lashes."

"And a thousand," interjected Sister Ann, proud that Britannic manhood could take so many.

"Oh, I saw the dreadfulest thing yesterday," added Huldah. "It was a woman; I thought at first it was a soldier; but it was a woman. They were whipping her through the streets. It made me sick."

"One hundred lashes on the bare back," explained Ann with calm satisfaction.

"Oh, shocking!" cried Mrs. Loreleigh, hitching up her lovely shoulders with a shiver.

"Oh, no, my dear, not at all," said Mrs. Oliver. "The Judge tells me it served her perfectly right. She was a receiver of stolen goods."

"But on the bare back!" insisted Mrs. Loreleigh. "Mercy! how it must have felt! Did she whoop?"

"Oh! I should say so; she screeched awfully," replied Huldah.

"She made a beesly howling," sneered Ann. "And an Englishwoman, too! If I was called on to take a hundred, I'd hold my jor about it if it killed me."

"But in public!" persisted Mrs. Loreleigh, who seemed to be fascinated by the coarse horror of the story. "And a round, slashing hundred!"

"Well, why not?" demanded Mrs. Oliver, a lady of an older school, and a Judge's wife. "Her husband got six times as many."

"Mercy! she did n't lack for sympathy; I wonder if he really gave her any. These pettish husbands!"

"I am sure you have a patient one, Mistress Loreleigh," flattered Mrs. Oliver, and then blushed scarlet over the inadvertence, for Loreleigh was generally sniffed at as being too patient.

There would have been an awkward silence, only that Mrs. Loreleigh uttered a tranquil giggle, and added, "Yes, he is a treasure."

"Well, where was I? I was talking about something," stammered the old lady, anxious to get away from a subject which had led her into such a blunder.

"Was n't it General Burgoyne's play?" asked Huldah, who had not yet received an invitation to that spectacle, and had made her call in the hope of getting one.

"Oh, yes; well, I was going to say, it's no time for such light-mindedness when Boston is in such a condition as it is in."

"Salt beef fifteen pence the pound," interjected the hostess with an arch giggle.

"Ah, it makes little difference to *you*," answered Mrs. Oliver, gently resenting the insinuation that she was painfully given to frugality. "But do let us consider those who are in want, and the general desolation of Boston. No, I say, it's no time for the drama. We had better all of us—the garrison as well as the citizens—be on our knees in our closets."

Mrs. Loreleigh laughed outright at the notion of her officer friends engaged in secret prayer. "My dear," she said, "the garrison never prays except in public. But do let our poor gentlemen have a little joviality. They need a farce to keep them out of the hospital."

"Can't the young ladies enliven them? They used to in my time. Now there is Miss Oakbridge; I am sure she could cheer up half a dozen."

Mrs. Oliver surveyed the girl with a lingering glance of admiration; so like her own youthful self, she thought, and therefore so pretty!

"More likely to kill half a dozen," said Mrs. Loreleigh, recurring in mind to the fable which she had imposed upon Moorcastle. "Where are you going to

bury the captain and lieutenant?" she added, addressing Huldah. "Dear me, how calmly you take it! But I believe people soon get used to murder—that kind of murder. Who knows but what I might learn to like it?"

"Oh, *you!*!" simpered Mrs. Oliver. But she checked herself, for though the subject of flirtation was delightful to the venerable coquette, she really must not countenance such joking in a married woman. "Surely, this is naughtier than the drama," she puckered. Then turning to Huldah, "I advise you, my love, to run away from dear Mrs. Loreleigh. The young gentlemen are safer company."

The pretty hostess laughed, patted the old lady on the shoulder, followed her to the door, and bade her adieu with a kiss. Then she rustled back to Huldah, sat down knee to knee with her, and pettishly took and held both her hands.

"Old Dame Oliver does n't like me a bit," she said with a sparkling smile, bubbling off in a cunning little cooing giggle. "But she would n't come to see me half so much if I did n't do just the things and catch just the people that she hectors me about. There's a lesson for you. If you want to bully the women, you must govern the men. And now let me talk to you about yourself. I am *so* glad you refused the captain. He is hard and hateful, and would have made a dreadful husband; and you have a right to say so frankly when people ask questions about it."

She had uttered all this concerning Moorcastle in a rapid chatter, as if to get through with it before Huldah could faint or fall to crying. The girl listened without flinching, and indeed with an air of being agreeably

fascinated. Sister Ann, sitting thousands of miles off in her Highgate dullness, and staring at them out of her marvelling, wide-open eyes, contrived to suspect that here was a story which they two had agreed upon, probably at some former interview.

But Mrs. Loreleigh had leaped lightly away from the delicate topic. "And now I want you to catch somebody worth having," she continued, jerking Huldah's hands alternately to keep her attention. "Come! You must n't go off into a turkey's dream while I am talking to you on business; you never will be a queen of society if you don't keep alive, and all alive, every minute. There is Major Brinsmade to be attended to;—wife lately buried, and no children;—just dying of lonesomeness. I am going to tell the poor, dear man what a sweet little girl you are."

Huldah burst out laughing, and so did Ann Oakbridge—a few seconds later. Perhaps no properly constituted woman could have helped it.

"Oh, you would be such a comfort to him, my dear!" continued Mrs. Loreleigh, echoing the laughter with her enchanting silvery tinkle. "And he 's a better man than the captain, and ever so much finer than the lieutenant, and sure to be a colonel."

Sister Ann nodded her head emphatically to each one of these particulars. It was sad to give up all chance of a coronet; but Major Brinsmade was at least an Englishman and a field-officer; he would do, for lack of better.

"I don't like widowers," softly drawled Huldah.

"My child, that 's your inexperience. When you have had one widower, you will never marry anything else."

" That 's just always what my mar said," interjected Ann with vivacity. " My par was her secknt; I mean she was his secknt."

Huldah had been gazing steadily into Mrs. Loreleigh's lovely iron-gray eyes. Of a sudden she leaned forward, caught her by the shoulders, and kissed her cheek, whispering, " I wish *you* were a widower."

" There, there," laughed the elder belle, blushing and disengaging herself. " Save those sweeties for the Major."

She threw a sharp, inquisitive glance at the girl's face, shook her smartly by the wrists as if to awaken her, and pushed her back into an upright position. Then she changed the subject, denouncing the doleful old fashions which prevailed in afflicted Boston, and hoping that the troubles would soon end so that it would be possible to order new stuffs and styles. " Goodness gracious!" she concluded, " we should be frights in London."

Ann Oakbridge, who had never had more than one dress a year in Highgate, added her little tribute of scorn for the colonies, tossing up her comely, freckled nose and sniffing, " Whatever can you expect outside of Lunnun?"

" Yes, indeed," said Huldah, staring vacantly at Ann. " But what did I come here for? I had something particular on my mind."

Ann colored and remained silent, but Mrs. Loreleigh made a happy guess. " Remember to be at the theatre to-night," she said. " Are you invited? No? Oh, that is *so* lucky! I 'll send Major Brinsmade for you. Now be sure you invite him in and behave pretty to him. Widowers are the easiest proposed to

of all men. They are used to caring for women; used to giving up to them. They can't refuse an offer."

Huldah tried to kiss her once more as they parted; but Mrs. Loreleigh dodged the girl with a giggle, as she might have dodged a man; then getting hold of her arms from behind, she pushed her caressingly out of the room.

"What's the meaning of such conduct?" Ann demanded of her sister-in-law the moment they were out of doors. "You ought to walk more lowly with your betters."

Huldah, who was gazing dreamily at a passing grenadier—tall, and straight-backed, and superbly swaggering—made no other reply than to whisper, "Is that Ash Farnlee?"

"No!" scoffed Ann. "That's one of the Loyal Americans."

But she glanced twice across the street to make sure that the man was not Farnlee.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THEATRICALS

ON reaching home Huldah ran up to her room and locked herself into it, as was her frequent custom of late.

Throwing off her hat and cloak, she swayed and twisted and bridled before the looking-glass for a minute or two, and then, sinking upon a chair by the head of her bed, buried her face in the pillow and softly whispered to it. But she had no time to indulge in the reverie for which she had sought to be alone. A smart rap and a summons in her mother's voice obliged her to open the door.

"Huldy," said Mrs. Oakbridge, in her thin, deliberate utterance, "what is this story about your being followed by somebody?"

Without looking her mother in the eyes the girl hastened back to her seat and buried her face in the pillow again.

"Huldy, what is it?" insisted Mrs. Oakbridge.

"It 's a man," the girl drawled unwillingly. "There!" she added, putting forth a hand, though still keeping her face averted. "See how he grabbed me by the wrist. Don't squeeze it. It 's sore."

The mother examined the wrist, noted that there

were red finger-marks upon it, and asked, "When was that done?"

Huldah dragged back her hand pettishly, and muttered, "You are always asking me questions."

"Huldah! answer me!" commanded Mrs. Oakbridge.

"I was *going* to. It was done this afternoon, just after I left Ann. I ran down to the wharf to look at the frigate that got in yesterday, and *he* came round a corner and caught hold of me. He wanted to marry me, he said; he always says that. He said so this morning—this afternoon, I mean. You are so cross with me I don't know what I'm saying. He held on to me and pinched me to make me answer him. But I screamed and tore away home. He has pounced on to me four or five times now. I can't go out without being scared for fear of meeting him. He's an officer, and wears epaulets, but I never can see his face. He always has a cloak on, with a high fur collar drawn up to his eyes, and a large hat drawn over his forehead. Just his eyes is all I can see."

"Take your head out of that pillow," said Mrs. Oakbridge. "Look up here; look at me."

Huldah straightened herself in her chair and gazed doggedly into her mother's face with an air of sulky defiance. "There!" she pouted. "You are always scolding me. What have I *done*? What *have* I? I wish you'd tell me."

Mrs. Oakbridge was confounded; she examined the round, soft wrist again; but the red finger-marks were certainly there.

"So this is what you have been brooding about?" she asked in a softened voice.

Huldah laid her arms on the pillow, dropped her head between them with a sigh, and presently drawled softly, "Ye-s."

"You must n't go out so much alone," said the mother. "Now tidy up your room, and then come down and set the table. After supper you shall do some quilting."

But this healthful programme was brushed aside by the early arrival of Major Brinsmade, who explained that he had been sent by Mrs. Loreleigh to bring Miss Oakbridge back to tea and the play.

He was a tall and slender man of thirty-five, with high cheek-bones and a sandy, freckled skin, but a sweet, pensive, and almost mournful expression. It was one of those plain faces which intelligent women are apt to study with sympathy, and to find ere long very agreeable, if not fascinating. Mrs. Oakbridge gave him one sharp glance of investigation, querying whether he could be the officer of mysterious surprises. But it was impossible to impute evil or silliness to a man who had that shyly gracious bearing and those honest, pathetic eyes. So Huldah and her red-coated escort set off arm in arm for the Loreleigh house.

"I am so grateful to you, Miss, for coming with me," said the Major as he looked kindly down into the dreamy blue eyes that were lifted to his.

Obviously he considered her little more than a child, and for that very reason found her lovely and attractive. There was something of the father in his expression, because there was something of the father in his heart. He had reached the age when a man longs to love even more than he longs to be loved. Huldah had a chance to win from this matured soul

(prematurely matured by bereavement) a profound and patient affection. Did she divine it? How could she when she was so young and shallow, and so occupied with another, or others?

Nevertheless, she was apparently interested in him, at least for the moment. There was a sparkle like a loving smile in the glances which she gave him. He found these glances charming, and looked down for them every time that he spoke to her, unconsciously drawing her a little nearer to his side, and hardly noting whither he was going. Any observing passer-by would have guessed that they two were affianced lovers.

"I wish it had been a longer march," he said as they entered the Loreleigh mansion.

"I wish so too," replied Huldah, so fervently that her good angel and her attendant Major both rejoiced. Brinsmade's whole soul was trembling in wonder and hope. It seemed to him that in less than a quarter of an hour it had been settled for him that he should give up his heart and win another.

And then, just for a single painful moment, a spasm of doubt crossed his face. How could it be that the place of the vanished one had been so suddenly claimed, and secured, and made good? But he was cheerier at the tea-table than he had been for a long time, even at tables where port and madeira and Jamaica punches flowed copiously.

"You must eat heartily, Major," the hostess said to him. "You will be hungry before we get through the Blockade of Boston. And we can't let you eat Miss Oakbridge, though of course you would like to."

"Would n't we all like to!" cried a saucy young

lieutenant who must have been high-born, or he would not have been there.

Mrs. Loreleigh gave him a kick under the table with the heel of her red shoe. Huldah glanced at the lieutenant and then at the Major, sending into the eyes of each the same dreamy, tender gaze. The youngster returned her glance swiftly, and then made a pitiful grimace at the frowning hostess, pretending that his shins were awfully hurt.

The Major had stared at the lieutenant with indignation; but in another minute he forgot his wrath in serving and watching Huldah. He helped her assiduously; he scarcely conversed with another person; and he was forever looking down into her eyes. A certain Captain Addison, and a jolly young refugee from Salem called Miss Hesketh, were much amused by his devotion, and flashed sly twinkles at each other.

Instantly after tea (or rather supper, and a hearty one) the ladies rustled upstairs and prepared for the play. Huldah, who was in a high-necked gown, flitted around the scantily attired, lovely hostess, arranging what little drapery there was to arrange and ending with a kiss on the round, white neck. But Mrs. Loreleigh had that healthy aversion to being fondled by her own sex which is common to women who are favorites with the other.

"Get away!" she said in a rather pettish whisper. "Save all your nonsense for the Major. You 've caught the best fellow in the garrison."

Two rather forlorn sleighs, drawn by horses who evidently suffered from the general scarcity of provisions, took the eight persons of the party to Faneuil Hall. It was a very select audience which had gath-

ered to witness the loyal farce of "The Blockade of Boston." Uniforms were everywhere; all the showy uniforms of the British army and navy; all sorts of epaulets, from those of generals down to those of lieutenants; three hundred officers at the least. And there, too, were the grandee Tories of Boston; the men in their powdered hair, and high-colored coats, and silk vests, and ruffles; the women in their long waists, and lofty headgear, and scarlet slippers.

A most respectful sergeant ushered the Loreleigh party to a box, or something in imitation of one, on the right of the stage.

"I don't see any generals; it can't be your place," whispered the saucy lieutenant as he undraped Mrs. Loreleigh of her out-of-door wrappings.

She whacked his fingers with her fan, glanced rapidly around the audience, sparkled her white teeth at one and another, and exulted, "Is n't it fine! We make a pretty respectable show yet. I wish Sam Adams and John Hancock could be brought in to see us."

"What sort of people, Mistress Loreleigh, were those rebel leaders?" asked Colonel Glendinning, a courteous, elderly warrior with red collops of cheeks and a vast spread of waistcoat.

"Disgustingly vulgar," said the Tory belle. "Sam Adams never had on a decent suit, except when he was clothed by charity. John Hancock was a strutting turkey-gobbler, and the head smuggler of these provinces. Joseph Warren was a sophomorical apothecary-surgeon, who neglected his shop and his few patients, and died a bankrupt, leaving his children beggars. James Otis went mad. I suppose the rest will in time."

"Great heavens, Madam!" stared the Colonel.

" But how in heaven's name could such persons lead all these provinces astray ? "

Addison and others glanced sidelong at Mrs. Loreleigh, as if wondering what she would do with Glen-dinning's puzzling question. But the spoiled loyalist beauty did not trouble herself to answer it at all. She had dismissed the subject from her mind, and she was nodding to new arrivals in the pit. Miss Hesketh, seeing that the Colonel was neglected and aggrieved, came to his diversion with a word or two.

" Is it true, sir, that the rebels mean to attack Boston shortly ? "

" Oh, bless you—no, my dear Miss—can't be true," scoffed the worthy veteran. " They talk of it now and then to keep their courage up. Their—their what do you call it ?—their Congress has recommended it to Mr. Washington. But bless your lovely eyes, Mr. Washington has n't the power to do it; he has n't the men. His army is dispersing at a wondrous rate. Oh, bless you, there won't be any attack; be quite easy on that point. And, if there is one, we are your devoted defenders."

He might have made other remarks worthy of enduring record, but at this moment there was a trampling of boots in the adjoining box, and two distinguished men appeared there. One was Howe, six feet high, large, shapely, and graceful, with a resemblance in the face to Washington. The other was Clinton, short and stout, his cheeks red and puffy, and his nose oddly prominent. The officers with Mrs. Loreleigh sprang up and saluted; the ladies bowed, showed their teeth, bridled, and blushed. Clinton nodded stiffly and awk-

wardly, but Howe was courtly and very gracious, especially in saluting Mrs. Loreleigh.

Huldah took little note of either the one or the other major-general. Her eyes were fixed on Moorcastle, who stood respectfully behind them. There was no flinching from the man who had won her love, merely to insult it and fling it away. She evidently meant to draw his attention; and when he at last did look at her, she felt that it was wonderful; they were both bewitched, she said to herself; they could not help it.

Moorcastle showed surprise at seeing her there, and the fixity of her gaze clearly moved him; for though he bowed ceremoniously, he did not at once turn away, and his dark visage flushed a little. In return for his salute she bent her pretty neck graciously, and, to his bewilderment, she smiled. It was such a significant smile, it had so much of invitation and allurement, that he could not help answering it. Then he tried to break the spell which was upon him by staring about the audience and exchanging recognitions with other ladies.

But after a minute he glanced at her again, drawn by an irresistible longing which he sought to believe was mere curiosity, but which was of course something more emotional. She was still watching him with the same subtle, provoking smile. A girl exchanging glances with an assured and betrothed lover could not have had a more confident and confiding expression. The fixed, fervent eyes seemed to be saying, "Why don't you come to me?"

Several persons noticed her behavior, and became more or less perturbed over it. Brinsmade, after trying in vain to regain her attention, glanced indignantly at Moorcastle, and fell back in his chair sorrowfully silent.

Captain Addison whispered to Miss Hesketh, " We shall have an affair of honor if some goddess does n't intervene." Mrs. Loreleigh showed that temper which burns under the superficial amiability of the spoiled belle, so like the trained ferocity of an old professional soldier under his exterior of trained calmness and obedience. She faced about in her chair, and sent Moorcastle a flash of anger which made him smirk apologetically and turn his back upon Huldah.

Then Brinsmade recovered heart to renew his conversation with the girl. He had a pathetic longing to reawaken her interest in him; or, more accurately, he longed to regain his own interest in her; it was dreadful to lose all that new-born love and hope. He pointed out Mrs. Oliver, whom he did not know by name, for he was a fresh arrival in Boston.

" A fair old lady over there opposite," he said. " She seems to watch you very amiably, and there is really something of a family look between you. I thought she might perhaps have the pleasure of being your aunt."

For the first time Huldah observed that faint resemblance between herself and Mrs. Oliver which gave the venerable gentlewoman so much satisfaction. But to the blooming young beauty the discovery brought only disgust and alarm. Should she ever be thus unwieldy, and have such blubbery cheeks, and such a striped pink color, and almost no chin? She came near clapping one hand to her piquant nose, with a view to pressing it down and making it aquiline, so that it should not remind people of the old lady's slightly uplifted proboscis.

" Why, that 's Dame Oliver," she said in pettish revolt. " I must say I don't see the likeness."

"Oh, well—really now—there is n't any," Brinsmade truckled. "Only, she seems so interested in you——"

He leaned back in his seat with a sigh, disappointed, and pained, and humiliated, as often happens to loving souls. Huldah resumed her staring at Moorcastle; but the sorrowful Major took no further notice of it; he was determined not to notice.

"Miss Oakbridge!" hissed Mrs. Loreleigh at last, "don't you propose to see the play at all?"

Unobserved by the bewitched Huldah, or at least without arousing her interest, the farce had begun. With entire composure, not even glancing at the angry queen of Bostonian fashion, she turned her dreamy eyes upon the stage. There was the American army, represented by two figures: a burlesque Washington with a frowsy wig, a whimsical uniform, and a bent sword; behind him, a rustic in shirt-sleeves, flourishing a rusty gun and talking through his nose. The audience of British officers and their native-born bootlickers was stamping and yelling with laughter. Of what had happened up to this point in the play Huldah had no idea.

She turned her eyes towards Howe's box, but Moorcastle had suddenly vanished, and the two generals were *not* laughing. Then, from near the door, the sergeant usher called in a long-drawn, brazen cry, "The enemy are attacking Bunker Hill."

"Oh, capital!" giggled Mrs. Loreleigh. "Part of the play, you understand."

So nearly everybody thought, and there was another roar of amusement, several persons facing about to clap the sergeant, who looked confounded by the compliment. But General Howe sprang to his feet, and

shouted in a tone which pierced the gayety like a cannon-ball, " Officers, to your posts!"

Every military ear recognized a summons to pressing duty, and three hundred uniformed men rushed for the doors with a noisy trampling of boots and upsetting of seats, above which shrilled the keen yelps of scared womankind. Then followed the citizen exodus, a turbulent stampede of red-faced or pale-faced Tories, tripping over prostrate chairs and tearing skirts and flattening cocked hats.

" Will you step off me, sir ? " screamed Mrs. Loreleigh, turning in scarlet fury upon corpulent Judge Oliver, who had planted one of his square toes on her watered satin. The old gentleman never noted who had scolded him, being too busy in hauling along panting Mrs. Oliver, who was gasping in a tearful treble, " Oh dear! I knew we ought not to be here."

No one cared for Huldah, and she was left to chance and her own devices, these last sure to be none of the wisest. She squalled once or twice without knowing it, and then seeing Moorcastle rushing back to his general, she dashed at him and tried to take his arm. But the aid-de-camp could not have stopped just then to wait upon Aspasia or Cleopatra. He gave her a blank stare, bounded over a bench which was in his way, and plunged on toward Sir William Howe.

Thereupon Huldah, uttering another unconscious yelp, ran after the outpouring audience and fought her way into the street; where she promptly recovered her habitual dreamy composure, and walked home alone as tranquilly as if it had been broad day; merely turning once to look at a young man who had hurried past her in the dim moonlight with averted face.

CHAPTER XXXV

“ WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE ? ”

THE panic in Faneuil Hall had been caused by Knowlton's expedition to burn what remained of Charlestown in order to prevent the English from obtaining fuel there.

During the afternoon of the next day Captain Moorcastle received an unsigned letter informing him that a rebel officer, no doubt a spy, was hiding in a deserted house on the corner of Water Street and Pudding Lane.

“ What nonsense ! ” he grumbled. “ Why should Mr. Washington send spies in here, when the town swarms with fellows aching to sell him information, and Sir William is turning out shoals of paupers every week or two ? ”

After studying the handwriting for a minute without being able to recognize it, he thrust the letter into one of his capacious pockets, and temporarily forgot it.

It was not till the evening of the following day, and then by the merest accident, that he went near the house in question. He had even got well past it when an impulse or caprice moved him to retrace his steps and take a long look at its deserted, poverty-stricken desolation. The windows were boarded up, and there was not a glimmer about the building, nor any other

suggestion of life. But what if there *should* be a spy there? he queried; and, although he smiled at the supposition, it won a little credence; he began to think, or to feel, that it was his duty to investigate.

Still, as he did not want to make himself ridiculous, he would not order out a squad on such whimsical service. Opening the side gate, he stole along a snowless, frozen path, and peeped around a rear corner of the house. Notwithstanding his care to avoid making a noise, he startled a man who stood at a door, obviously engaged in prying it open and breathing loudly with the labor. This man, a soldier and a house-breaker, gave the Captain a glare of affright and fled at full speed, spurred by an expectation of three hundred lashes, or perhaps of a ball in the back.

The lock had been broken, and the door was ajar. Moorcastle took from his pocket a wax taper (as a belated man does even now in many a city of continental Europe), and after a brief controversy with his flint and steel, succeeded in getting a light.

The first room which he entered was the kitchen, a bare and melancholy apartment, the furnishings gone, the fireplace black and sour with fallen soot, and the floor sprinkled with dead cockroaches. Should he push on and risk an adventure? He was for duty that day, and had his rapier at his side. He gently opened a door, stole cautiously up a stairway, and in the same noiseless fashion entered a bedroom.

Something rustled; but Moorcastle slid up to a table and seized a pistol lying there; then he glanced at a figure which had risen from a bed. It was a tall young man, his eyes blinking in the light of the taper, and his swarthy face still heavy with sleep,

though there was a gathering horror in it. He was dressed in shabby citizen costume, and his black hair was scissored close to his head, while an old brown tie-wig lay on the pillow.

Moorcastle stepped backward, closed and bolted the door, returned to the table, and, keeping it between him and the bed, looked fixedly in the tall youngster's face. Of a sudden he hissed out a string of oaths, not speaking aloud, but in a whisper.

"What brings you here?" he demanded. "What in the name of perdition have you sneaked into this garrison for? I know you. You are the Lexington fellow—the man who would n't shoot me. What the devil did you throw yourself in my way for *here?*"

Then came another hissing gust of blasphemies. All Moorcastle's arrogance and violence of temper had been roused to a tempest by the perplexities of his situation. He was a terrible long way from being courteous and refined in his language.

Ash Farnlee meanwhile had recovered his waking wits, and apparently his ordinary self-possession, though doubtless his heart was beating hard enough. He sat down on the edge of the bed, wrapped a ragged cloak about himself, and gazed attentively at Moorcastle.

"Don't you know," continued the latter, "that it is my duty to arrest you? You are a Yankee officer; you are here as a spy. Of course I ought to arrest you. What a position I shall be in if I don't!"

"Yes," returned Ash. "And what a position you will be in if you do!"

"Oh, I remember it all," growled Moorcastle. "You might have shot me, and for dem good cause,

perhaps. And, instead of that, you saved my life. Demme! if you had n't made me dismount, that other fellow would have scattered my brains. Well, what in the demon's own name do you want?"

But before Ash could reply the Captain broke out in another storm of rage. "I wonder if you comprehend what a demnable situation you've got me into. Here I am, an English officer and gentleman, and an aid on the commandant's retinue! and you expect me to let a rebel spy run loose, and carry his plans and notes to the enemy! Why in perdition does Mr. Washington send officers on such dastardly low business? I thought he was more of a gentleman; he has good blood in him. But demme if I believe you provincials know what it is to be a gentleman."

"I was not sent," declared Ash. "I came of my own choice."

"Oh! wanted to die for your cause, I suppose. Dem your cause! Why could n't you die for your stupid, hopeless, villainous cause in some other way? You 'll find chances enough. The idea of selecting the gallows, and picking me out for hangman! Good Ged! a Moorcastle turning informer!—oh, demmit! I should have an infernally fine time looking at myself in a glass after that, should n't I?"

Here the running wax of the taper burned his fingers. He started, just as a man might start under ordinary circumstances; then he lighted a tallow dip which stood in a tinned candlestick on the table, blew out the taper, and pocketed it; all this in the most natural manner imaginable. The commonplace episode appeared to tranquillize him completely. He sat down, hitched his chair up to the table, examined the lock

of the pistol which he held in his hand, smiled scornfully at the antique workmanship, and resumed the dialogue composedly.

"What have you learned?" he asked, throwing out his heavy chin with an air of mockery. "I'll venture ten guineas you have n't got any more facts than I would have felt free to send you by open letter, if you had made official request for them."

Ash smiled, not by any means gayly, for the gallows seemed very near. "You appear to take it for granted," he said, "that I am here as a spy."

"Oh, I say!" exclaimed Moorcastle, eagerly. "Are you here about something else? There was a young lady in your history once. Did you skulk into the town after *her*? That would make a difference, you must perceive."

Ash quivered with agitation, for here was a suggestion which might perchance save him from the death of a spy, and his first impulse was to make a clutch at it. In another instant he had rejected the subterfuge, partly because it could not avail him in case his clothing were searched, and partly from a revolt of honor, or pride, or anger.

"Does it matter what brought me here?" he said. "I am an American officer in an English garrison, in disguise."

"Yes, demmit! and a cursed lunatic into the bargain," grumbled Moorcastle.

Ash smiled bitterly, and continued, "As to that other matter, I will tell you—what I can. I had loved that girl for years. I was to offer myself the day I met you. It was you—I suppose it was—who broke it off."

Here he suddenly stopped, and after trying vainly to swallow down a spasm in his throat, he burst into a succession of hoarse gasps and hid his face in his hands.

"By Jove!" Moorcastle gasped in sympathy, twisting on his chair as if he were in physical suffering. The spectacle of a brave man in tears touched this hard creature, who had perhaps never yet been touched by the tears of a woman. "Well, that settles my business," he presently added in something like a groan, as if he were pitying himself now.

Farnlee uncovered his face and gazed with a puzzled air at his captor.

"It was n't my fault," resumed Moorcastle. "Nobody told me there was anything between you."

"No—not your fault. It was the fault of—everything; of the way things are here."

"Yes, I see; I understand. An Englishman takes the lead, of course. I see. It's demnable hard on the provincials. Well, never mind that now. So you came in here, we'll admit, to look up the young lady."

"No!—never!" said Ash with a scowl of anger, to which Moorcastle responded with a scowl of disappointment, though in the end he nodded approval.

"Exactly," he resumed. "You can't forgive her; and you ought n't. And still you saved my life. Curst if I don't wish you were a brother officer of mine. Would you take a loyalist commission now? I supposed not," he growled when Ash shook his head. "But you leave me in a doose of a strait. By Jove! if you had sent me to the other world there at Lexington, I could n't have been in a much worse mess now than I am. What in perdition do you expect me to

do? Shove you out by the same hole that you sneaked in at?"

"I must own that I might have been on more honorable duty," avowed Farnlee with a blush.

"Oh, this is of no use," Moorcastle groaned. "I am just gabbling to put off the evil moment. I know what I must do; I have got to smuggle you outside of our lines; that is what I must do. But see here; you must n't carry off any papers; you comprehend that, of course. So stand out there and strip."

As there was no sense in resistance, Ash rose, dropped his cloak, and began to take off his coat.

"Never mind," said the Englishman. "I'll trust your honor. Give me all your documents."

Ash thrust his hand here and there into his clothing, and laid successively on the table various slips of manuscript, eventually declaring, "That is all, on my word of honor."

"As an officer and gentleman?" demanded Moorcastle.

"As an officer and gentleman."

"Are those papers in your handwriting?"

"All of them."

"Resume your seat."

Moorcastle opened the slips one after the other, glanced through them with a smile, and finally laughed outright.

"What a blazing idiot you have made of yourself!" he said. "Why, there is n't a cursed thing here that you could n't have picked up among every pack of poor devils that we send outside of the lines. Curse me if you ought n't to be hung for your stupidity in running such a risk for nothing. Well, beg pardon,

'pon honor. You meant well, of course; that is, you meant ill to *us*. Do you comprehend, by the way, that this is a cursed queer situation? You must n't mind my flying at you. I am going to get the worst of the business."

" You are doing a most generous act if you mean to let me out," said Ash. " I don't know how I can ever repay you," he added with the awkwardness and embarrassment of virile youth when placed under a great obligation.

" Well, by gad, I 'm glad you feel sore over it," grumbled Moorcastle. " It 's the only revenge I shall get on you for putting me into this demnition box. But, take notice; you can save me something. Not a word concerning what has passed between us for ten years to come; not a word to a living soul, loyal or disloyal, not even to your military superiors."

The promise was given in good faith and willingly. Moorcastle burned the manuscripts one by one, tossing the blazing fragments into the fireplace. Then he re-lit his taper, blew out the candle, and rose.

" Move on ahead of me," he said. " It won't do to leave you here, for fear of a chance arrest by the provost, and nobody knows what devilish hotchpotch as a consequence. I shall have to hide you in my quarters. A gentleman may as well be hung for a sheep as for a lamb."

Boston was small in those days, so that they were soon in Moorcastle's lodgings, the door locked and candles lighted.

" Do you smoke?" inquired the host of his unwelcome guest. " This is one of those adventures that a man wants to put in his pipe. What! you don't use

tobacco? So your only vices are rebellion, shooting the king's troops, and spying on the king's garrisons. I think you had better drop those, and take to smoking and swearing, as being more godly."

He filled a long clay pipe, threw himself back in his armchair, and puffed thoughtfully. "I should like to say one thing," he presently resumed. "Hope the subject won't be disagreeable to you. But I think I ought to mention it. You can still have Miss Oakbridge, for all me; nothing has happened between her and me to prevent."

Farnlee shook his head; he could not talk of it.

"Exactly," nodded Moorcastle, who had noted the gesture, though he had not raised his eyes from his pipe-bowl. "Constitutional revolt. No taxation without representation."

The simile was so unexpected and whimsical that Farnlee acknowledged it by a ghastly smile.

"And so," continued Moorcastle, "you went into this fight to make Americans as good as Englishmen?"

"That was it; that or thereabouts. Up to a certain time I had taken little interest in questions of politics. All of a sudden I found that I was rated as belonging to an inferior breed. All of a sudden I got a slap in the face from one of my own country-people; from an old-time playmate and worshipped friend; from a woman. She buffeted me because I was not an Englishman, and you were. Suppose you were in my place. Suppose you were a provincial, and buffeted for it."

"I should n't like it. But note you this; that feeling of yours goes a devil of a way; it points to a war for independence. It's a deeper question than the question of taxation."

"You are right. Nothing will settle it, I presume, and indeed believe, but blood, and much blood."

"It's an ugly outlook. Why not shoot your own lickspittles, instead of us redcoats? But, of course, we could n't allow that."

"I think the war will last till they are got rid of somehow."

"I think we shall crush you. What will you do then—you personally?"

"I hope not to live to see it. But if I do, there are forests in the West and hollow trees in them. I mean never to consort with Englishmen again except upon a footing of exact equality."

"We shall only settle it by fighting," said Moorcastle, shaking his head gravely. "So long as the two countries ride together the mother country will ride a-front. Why, demmit, she should!—but never mind as to that. We might argue a week, and only get further apart. What did your people burn up the rag-tag end of Charlestown for?"

"Probably to keep you from getting fire-wood there."

"Nonsense! We can burn half of Boston without hurting a good subject. You did it to make a show of confidence, and conceal your weakness. Your army numbers less than fourteen thousand, total."

"You had best not rely upon that guess, Captain."

Moorcastle drew a paper from his vest pocket, and said with a smile of mockery: "Here is Mr. Washington's return of the eighth January, a week ago: thirteen thousand five hundred and nine, total. He counts at this moment less than twelve thousand effectives. We can afford to wait till his rabble disperses altogether.

So you see that we also have our spies," he continued, laughing outright at Farnlee's expression of amazement and chagrin. "I don't lurk around your quarters myself. I can find more suitable persons for that business."

Ash, of course, had not a suspicion that Benjamin Church, a leading member of the Massachusetts Legislature, was supplying the British commander with information. "I was aware," he replied, sulkily, "that you had deserters from us."

"Yes, hundreds," said Moorcastle, pleased to keep him on a false trail. "All your Irishmen will get over here, if you don't camp farther away. The poor Teagues seem to be crazy to hear their own lingo again; and certainly they can hear enough of it in Boston; crowds of our fellows are Irish."

He finished his pipe, knocked out the ashes, and continued: "In the morning I shall clap you into a gang to be landed at Chelsea. Lock yourself in here and go to sleep. I have a grand round to make."

We need not follow Ash through the troubled dozings and anxious waitings of his remaining hours in Boston. Late in the following forenoon, after a chilling voyage in an open rowboat, he reached Chelsea in company with twenty other tatterdemalions, all of them shivering and hungry, though not all thirsty. Nor need we relate in full his interview with Brigadier-General Horatio Gates, the Adjutant-General of the Continental Army. He had been deported as a suspicious vagrant, he explained, and had not been able to bring away his notes, but could give certain facts from memory, only they seemed to be already known.

Gates, a handsome, Roman-nosed gentleman of forty-eight, bowed and bowed over the narrative with his

habitual courtesy. He sympathized with the Captain's disappointment; but the Captain had risked his life in the performance of a responsible and difficult duty; the Captain should be mentioned favorably to his Excellency.

Captain Moorcastle, who had just done the most generous deed of his life, had no such consolations and approbations. He had paid a personal debt of honor; but at what a cost to his official honor!

"By Jove, I ought to be hung for a traitor," he thought. "And, by Jove, who can say but what I will be?"

But he knew what to do about it; he was going to punish himself. He wrote a letter of resignation, and took it in person to Sir William Howe.

"Want to sell out?" demanded the General, after he had stuck out his lips and scowled and stared. "What's that for, Moorcastle? Don't you know that you have a splendid future before you in the army? I won't approve the application."

"It is a personal affair, General, of extreme urgency. I beg you to believe that I am positively required and obliged to quit the service."

There was some further dialogue, but the resignation was endorsed, and leave granted.

"A career gone for a woman! and a provincial at that!" Moorcastle grumbled as soon as he was alone. "How many more messes will the jilts get me into?"

Yet before the week had ended he was at his gallantries again. There are men whose lives are ruled by the impulses of temperament, as a St. Vitus patient is jerked hither and thither by his malady.

CHAPTER XXXVI

HULDAH'S ADMIRERS

Did Huldah write the anonymous letter which revealed Farnlee's hiding-place to Moorcastle?

If she did, we need not judge her for it, nor even suppose that she had a definite motive. As a moral agent she was at this time hardly more reliable or responsible than a soap-bubble flung upon the breeze.

Meantime she was much interested in her mysterious suitor, the officer enveloped to his eyes in a cloak, who rushed out upon her from alleys, and declared his passion and vanished. She had got over her first shyness concerning the subject, and willingly related her whimsical adventures to her mother, prattling with a curious glibness and sometimes laughing heartily.

"Oh, you would laugh yourself," she said. "You ought to see him whisk when he hears anybody coming. I've got pretty well used to him now. I tell him the same thing every time; I tell him to go to my father; and then he mopes off. I begin to think (he is so *very* careful to keep his face covered) that he must be an officer of high rank. Mother, I suppose you won't believe me; I suppose you'll say it's some of my ridiculous conceit of myself; but I do suspect it is General Burgoyne."

Mrs. Oakbridge stared in amazement, but not in

complete incredulity. She did not know whether Burgoyne was married or single, nor whether he had a good repute or an evil one, except that he wrote plays and encouraged acting, which was, of course, a bad sign. Nor did she pause to consider how unlikely it was that a major-general would cut up such pranks as Huldah had described. What did the worthy woman know of major-generals and their ways ?

Huldah was certainly very handsome; even a puritan mother could not help seeing that and having her head a little turned thereby; it seemed to her at times that the girl was handsome enough to make a fool of anybody. But whether this unknown lover was General Burgoyne or not, it was time to take some serious measures in regard to him. So she went to her husband, and put it to him that it was his duty to do—whatever he thought best.

" Well, what *is* best ? " demanded Oakbridge, crossly.

" Why not go to the Provost ? It is his business to keep the garrison in order."

" And tell him it 's General Burgoyne ? I dast n't."

" No, not tell him that ; tell him it 's an officer."

Jehiel wanted his wife to go with him, but mustered the pluck to go alone. The Provost was a little martinet of a major with leathery cheeks and sharp eyes and an eagle beak, who looked fierce enough to order that the whole universe should have a thousand lashes. Nevertheless, he did his disciplined best to be urbane to a solid citizen who had been of service to the garrison.

" An officer ? " he queried in a high, rasping voice.

" He must be crazy, sir. I don't believe we have any

crazy officers. However, he may be drunk; that 's possible. Well, sir, I 'll secure him, by gad, a private interview with his Excellency."

Oakbridge took his departure in a grievous fright, lest Huldah's persecutor should really prove to be General Burgoyne. What would happen to a Bostonian, a mere provincial by birth and residence, who should make trouble for a Britannic major-general?

Three days later he was sent for to the Provost's office. He went thither in trembling haste, expecting to be confronted with some haughty, epauletted Lothario, who would perhaps curse him and give him a caning.

"Well, sir, we can't light upon your rogue," said the major. "Does he continue to persecute the young lady?"

"Every time she goes out," affirmed Oakbridge. "Yesterday and day before yesterday. Why, she came home yesterday with her wrist pinched black and blue."

The Provost tinkled a little bell which stood on his writing-table. A strongly built man in citizen costume entered, saluted in the sharp style of an old soldier, and stood at attention.

"Sergeant," demanded the Provost, "are you sure that you know this gentleman's daughter by sight?"

The sergeant said yes; he described Oakbridge's house and store; he described Huldah minutely, including her costume.

"Did you shadow her yesterday and day before yesterday? And did any one annoy her in any fashion?"

The sergeant told quite a long story—he had seen

Miss Oakbridge go out on both the days in question; he and Private Tomson had followed her every turning until she got home again; she had talked with ladies, entered shops, lingered around headquarters, and watched a review on the Common; but she certainly had not been addressed by any man in a cloak or in a uniform.

The official hand waved magisterially, and with another stiff salute the sergeant stiffly retired, much as if he were a clockwork automaton.

"Now, sir, you may rely upon that report," said the Provost. "The sergeant is a good detective, and I confide in his good faith and thoroughness. Excuse me if I make a bold suggestion. Consult a doctor as to this affair. Young ladies sometimes imagine such adventures."

Oakbridge, thoroughly confounded and distressed, began to stammer a medley of thanks and apologies. But there had been as much time granted to his family tragedy as official business could spare. The Provost bowed; the pitiless little bell tinkled again; another human creature, with his griefs, or his criminalities, was ushered in; and the sorrowing father wandered pensively back to his troubled home.

"I feared it was so," groaned Mrs. Oakbridge, when she had heard the tale. "I feared she must be lying; only I could not endure to believe it. We must have our minister here."

"Call Doctor Lloyd," said Oakbridge, who had been deeply impressed by the Provost and his little bell.

The doctor, when he came, spent little time in listening to the case, and asked but few questions. At last he hitched his chair close up to Mrs. Oakbridge,

and mumbled something in her ear which made her cringe and turn white. Then he departed, pocketing his half-dollar with an air of having well earned it, as indeed he had.

Not more than ten minutes later there was a consultation between two of Huldah's most loving friends, her mother and her sister-in-law.

"Let me talk to her, mem," urged Sister Ann. "She don't hearken to nobody as she do to me, not even to you, mem, wrong though it be. I 'll tell her plain she 's got to have done with her flumry and nonsinse, and take Mr. Eastwold as quick as ever he 'll say the word. It 's all just nothink but that mis'able Capting Moorksle a-buzzing in her head, poor thing. Once she 's merried to Eastwold, the whole fuss will be over; and she 'll be ever so good a wife to him; and lots too good, for that matter."

Here the stalwart creature shed a tear or two over the final vanishing of her dream as to a coronet for her sister-in-law.

To everybody's surprise Huldah made no objection to the proposal that she should take up with Eastwold. She had always liked him, she glibly told Ann; she wondered how she could ever have thought of refusing him; if he would say boo to her again, she would n't be a goose.

Ann was just purring to herself over the sensible quality of this talk when the freaky child added, "But what will my general say? What about the poor man in the cloak?"

"Oh, flumry!" exclaimed the indignant English-woman. "I wonder how ever you had the face to tell us that pack of lies."

This vigorous treatment seemed to be just what the case required; the girl looked thoroughly sheepish, and uttered not a word in defence of her fable.

" You richly deserve a good leathering," continued Ann, with the fervor of righteousness. " And if you get up any more mysteries, or if you try to crawl out of the merridge after the word is spoke, I hope to the gracious Father Oakbridge will give you one."

Leaving Huldah daunted and silenced, the energetic creature strode off to consult with Mrs. Loreleigh as to the Eastwold project, trusting that the belle and toast of loyal Boston could send the young gentlemen of the garrison about their social and sentimental duties.

Mrs. Loreleigh, experienced and reckless flirt though she was, listened to the tale of Huldah's mental bewilderments with throbbing compassion, so surely will a tragedy of the heart enlist the sympathy of womanly nature, however perverted by coquettices. Ann narrated all the particulars of the case with true British straightforwardness of diction and feeling. Mrs. Loreleigh reddened from chin to forehead as she listened; but the blush did not spring from startled spiritual delicacy. She had a strange medley of emotions; among other things, she half envied the girl; here was a fervor of feeling which was worth living for. She herself had never yet gone cracked over a man; and she actually wished that she knew how it felt.

All the same, it was a pitiable affair. The Captain had behaved most selfishly and wrought great misery; and she could not help feeling that he ought to be punished for it. Yet to herself he had always been nice, and of late quite markedly attentive, so that she had begun to like him not a little. It was rather a

shock to hear him exposed and denounced after the plain, blunt fashion of this fervid daughter of Highgate. She listened to the storm of honest Cockney invective with a sensation that it was rather too personal; but in the end the better part of her womanhood triumphed, and her temper revolted hotly against Moorcastle.

"It is abominable," she said, biting her lips nervously, as she frequently did when angry. "He has no business to divert himself with driving decent girls crazy. I 'll tell him what I think of his behavior. You may trust me for that."

"But about Mr. Eastwold?" queried Ann, who even in her wrath and mourning did not forget business.

"Oh, you may feel sure of *him*. When a man comes back twice he 'll come back thrice, if he 's whistled to. I 'll send him around to you. Only you must keep your sister up to the notion of him; you must n't leave off watching her a minute. When a girl gets into that love-cracked state she needs looking to, I suppose; does n't she?"

Mrs. Loreleigh wanted to know, at least by hearsay (though preferably by experiment), all the mysteries of the tender passion.

"I 'll hold her by the bits," promised Ann, and went away comforted. How poor Eastwold was to fare with a flighty wife on his hands she did not consider for a moment, nor did any other feminine partisan of Huldah's, not even conscientious Mrs. Oakbridge, senior.

Mrs. Loreleigh remained alone, walking up and down like an agitated man, and biting her lips until they were sore. Much as she pitied Huldah, and by moments envied her, she was thinking chiefly of Moor-

castle. He was to call on her that afternoon, and she had looked forward to his coming with agreeable excitement, getting herself up for the interview in her loveliest fashion. But now, for the moment, she wanted to make him "feel bad"; in fact it seemed to her that she longed to box his right honorable ears. By times, to be sure, she was surprised at her emotions, for never before had she been so angry with an admirer.

"I must be ill," she said to herself; "something must be the matter with me."

Well might she be astonished at finding herself wrathful against a man because he had jilted another pretty woman. But she *was* unmistakably wrathful against this coming man; she was as nervously eager to plague him as if he had been her owny-doanty husband.

Moorcastle was approaching the house in one of those vacillating moods which precede wrong-doing much oftener than does a positive evil purpose. He had not decided to break the decalogue, but he was distinctly ready to yield to temptation. It seemed to him that something was due him from somebody. He had done a good deed, and was suffering for it; he was (to speak loosely) a martyr to holiness; Heaven owed him a stroke of luck. So he was prepared, not indeed to push Mrs. Loreleigh into an elopement, but to take her along with him if she were inclined to go.

Meantime, somewhat to his annoyance, she was occasionally crowded out of his thoughts by another figure, the accusing figure of Huldah. The Provost had told him of Miss Oakbridge's imaginary lover, and had been disagreeable enough to chuckle, "We supposed, of course, it was you, Moorcastle."

Well, so it was, in a manner; it was he who had hunted her under a cloak of false pretexts; it was he who had been a delusion to her and a terror to those who loved her.

"Pshaw! colonial girls must look out for themselves," he muttered. "What better could she expect from an English gentleman?" he added in further self-justification, meaning *gentilhomme*.

He began his interview with Mrs. Loreleigh by squeezing her hand as he said good-day. She perfectly understood the pressure as a continuation of their last previous conversation, and as a prelude to suggestions whose nature she could divine from his flushed face and turbid eyes. She drew her hand away, stepped back a pace, and stood looking at him without asking him to sit.

"You have called to bid good-bye, I suppose," she said, and bit her lip to keep it from trembling.

"You knew, then—" he stammered, conscious that her manner was unfriendly, though he could not guess why. "Yes, I was about to leave Boston. But—"

"Well, it is time," she broke out passionately, as even fine ladies did break out in the elder days. "You have driven one Boston girl cracked. It's time you went. I don't mind your saying all sorts of things to married women; they can take care of themselves. But even a British officer and nobleman ought not to trifle with young girls of decent families."

There was nothing for him to do but to turn pale, and make a ceremonious bow, and leave the room without a word.

Mrs. Loreleigh stood alone, breathing hard through her fine distended nostrils, and showing the gleaming

edges of her small teeth between her quivering lips. She looked exactly as a fair lady ought to look who has just put a dirk through the tough heart of an unscrupulous woman-hunter.

Five minutes later she was sorry that she had spoken so violently; half an hour later she would have been glad to grant Moorcastle a scene of reconciliation; but they two never met again in the game of coquetry. That evening he had his luggage packed, and the next day he sailed for England.

Huldah received the news of his departure in a perfectly sane fashion; that is, she shut herself into her room and cried all the afternoon.

But by evening she was in her dreamy mood again, her eyes settled tenderly on some invisible object, presumably an imaginary adorer. Out of this reverie she was startled by a summons to receive Lieutenant Eastwold in the parlor. She tripped in gayly, listened with a yearning smile to his renewed offer of marriage, threw herself impulsively against his beating heart, assured him that she had always loved him, clung to him while he stayed, and wept when he left. Probably there was not a happier fellow that night in Boston than honest, fervent Eastwold, riding grand rounds through the mud and slush of a January thaw, and facing the sour east wind charged with melting snow. If any other creatures were as rejoiced as he, they must have been the girl's father and mother.

So much the greater was the surprise and grief in the Oakbridge dwelling when it became clear during the next day that Huldah had disappeared.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A SEARCH FOR MOORCASTLE

HULDAH had simply stolen out of the back door of the house and wandered away through the semi-solitude of desolate Boston.

She was dressed in her finest raiment, a habit with her of late except when her mother checked her vanity, for her father, like a true male, seldom noted whether she had on one thing or another.

Yet it was not a day to tempt a young lady abroad for mere parade. The unpaved sidewalk was pasty with mud, and the unpaved roadway sloppy with puddles. A gray mist, the ghost of the vanishing snow, irritating to the lungs and the nerves, veiled the outlines of the houses and covered the harbor. Few people were out in the January thaw besides soldiers, laborers, and beggars.

The soldiers looked fine to the girl, and in truth they were fine. Ever since fuel had arrived by sea, and the demolition of buildings had therefore ceased, Sir William Howe had been toiling like a giant to bring the garrison back to neatness. "The men lately engaged in the working parties," he ordered, "must be immediately made as clean and decent as possible." And again, "The commanding officer is surprised to find the necessity of repeating orders that ought long since

to have been complied with." Then followed a solemnizing catalogue of military offences in the way of costume. "These unsoldier-like neglects," he concluded, "must be immediately remedied."

Accordingly the redcoats who passed Huldah in the fog were as sweet to look at as pinks. The enlisted men had their leather stocks on; the edges of their cocked hats were trimly bound; the hair was smooth, well powdered, and neatly clubbed; the shirts were clean and nicely frilled at the wrists; the breeches were snug about the knees; the buttons shone like stars. Nothing human could well be daintier than the marines, with their closely fitted half-gaiters, and their rosettes in front of their hats. The officers all had quarter-leggings, or else long boots; and those on duty wore their crimson sashes under their sword-belts.

Huldah glanced at each and every one of these scarlet dandies who strutted past her. Her gaze was so fixed and bold, yet so dreamy and strange, that many a one, even of the common soldiers, looked back at her over his shoulder and then moved on hesitatingly, as if he were bewitched in body and mind. But it was open day, and the terror of the grim Provost was abroad, so that neither officer nor man addressed her. Under the ægis of discipline, edged about with the gory tails of the pitiless cat, she walked as safely beside grenadiers and tarpaulins as if she were among the shining ones of Paradise.

She was longing all the while after Moorcastle. She had stolen money from her father's strong box to pay her passage to England, whither her false lover (dearest of all lovers always) had fled, or rather had been borne.

For to her flighty perceptions he was not false; he had quitted her through some mysterious stress of evil fortune; he was impatiently awaiting her coming. The transport *Belfast* was to sail that day, and she meant to get aboard of it and follow him to England.

It was delightful to think of the voyage, though she had to struggle to keep her mind on it, for the most trivial things distracted her attention. Over and over she pictured the meeting with her darling; sometimes in a monstrous gray castle amid his high-born relatives; sometimes alone under solemn oaks through which fell glimmers of moonlight; then here, and then there, till the changes wearied her not a little; smiling all the while as she tramped through the muddy snow.

A few minutes of walking brought her to Wentworth's Wharf, where the *Belfast* was taking on her final belated passengers. The forward bulwark was lined with faces, nearly all pallid, haggard, solemn, patient, the faces of invalid soldiers. On the quarter-deck stood a one-armed lieutenant, who looked puzzled when Huldah smiled upon him, but lifted his hat with ceremonious courtesy in reply. Sailors aloft were loosening the weather-stained hempen canvas of the main- and topsails. The black shrouds and the greasy masts were trickling with the dew deposited by the ghostly fog. A southwest wind, heavily laden with chilly moisture, promised just breeze enough to send the ship out of the harbor.

At the foot of the gangway plank stood a sentry in his red coat, a ship's officer with a cockade on the front of his cap, and two burly sailors in their sea-going raggery. Huldah went composedly up to the group, and set her little foot on the slimy plank.

"Beg pard'n, mem," said the mate. "Show your order, if you please."

"But I have money to pay my passage," the girl returned, producing her wallet.

"Beg pard'n, mem. We must have an order from headquarters. Gov'm't transport, mem."

"But I am an officer's wife," Huldah asserted with spirit.

The mate stared at her, and then glanced at the sentry, as if for information and advice. "Beg pard'n, mem," he said at last. "Would n't dare take on a body without an order. Excuse me, mem; please stand aside a bit; passenger wants to go aboard."

Huldah made way for a one-legged soldier, who was gently helped up the plank by the two sailors, one of whom muttered with a tobacco-stained grin, "Johnny, they did n't hit yer for fun."

"Is that all?" hoarsely bellowed a square-built man who was leaning over the quarter-deck rail.

The mate glanced at a list which he held in his hand, scored a name with a broken thumb-nail, and bellowed back, "All told, sir."

"Then cast off and tumble aboard," ordered the captain, lifting his broad, brown face toward his upper canvas and whistling softly for a wind—just a little more, and from the same quarter.

Huldah seemed to comprehend that she was not to sail in the *Belfast*. She nodded a smiling farewell to the wounded lieutenant, who answered with another stare of surprise and another elaborate bow. Then she faced about, laid one hand familiarly on the arm of a pug-nosed man who wore the white cockade of the Loyal Irish Volunteers, and said with a coaxing pout

of her rosy lips, "Please tell me how to get out of Boston."

The man grinned in perplexity, scratched his head with one thick finger, and replied in a Gaelic yell, "It 's Hudson's Point ye 'll have to find, me leddy. They 's boats from there ivery day."

He meant, of course, the ferry-boats to Charlestown, which everybody in the city knew about. But Huldah was quite satisfied with the direction; she thanked him with a giggle, and set off eagerly for Hudson's Point. Nothing befell her on the way excepting that she soaked her foot-gear through, and daubed her skirts with mud. The search for her had not commenced. Eastwold was at this very time hastening toward her home to ask for one more assurance of that love which he had found so difficult to win, and which still seemed to him so incredible a prize.

It so happened that General Howe was that day sending to the mainland a gang of his pauperized Bostonians. There were several whale-boats at the Ferry Way, partially filled already with miserable creatures and their scanty packs of luggage, while other miserable creatures were unsteadily trampling into them, struggling for seats, quarrelling, squalling, swearing. Huldah joined the migrating swarm without hesitation, and scurried her way into one of the boats, where accident gave her a seat.

The people nearest her were a family: three gaunt women, two slab-sided youngsters, and a toothless, red-nosed grandsire; all looking as people naturally might who had sold their last bed and devoured their last crust; all tattered, lean, pallid, slavish, wolfish, vicious. It was evident from the lank fall of the

women's skirts about their thighs that they had little or no underclothing. The bony youngsters doubled up on the floor of the boat, and pressed their crossed arms into their midriffs, as if to stifle hunger. The youngest woman, a ghastly girl of sixteen or seventeen, leaned her back against the knee of an oarsman, turned her face up to his with a cheeky leer, and slyly accepted from him a sea-biscuit. The old man chewed his toothless gums, and babbled in a piping voice of some bygone war, dispensing to leeward of him an acid perfume of hard cider.

It is quite possible, by the way, that these seeming ne'er-do-wheels had been respectable laboring people eighteen months agone, before George III. undertook to pacify Boston by closing its port and throttling its industry.

In time the boats slipped out from the Ferry Way, and, stealing slowly around the headland of Charlestown, turned their sharp bows up the Mystic River. Still no one spoke to Huldah, and probably no one recognized her, for the boatmen were seafaring people by profession, while the passengers were mainly occupied with their own misery. She was as torpid as the others; taking no note of whither she was going; sometimes staring fixedly at the eldest of those round-shouldered youngsters; sometimes smiling tenderly on some shape of her dream life.

The three women watched her spitefully; studied her clothing piece by piece with a stare of hopeless envy; turned occasionally to crane up the misty stream, and shivered in the sour wind. The whole boat-load was a forlorn spectacle of our human nature degraded and stupefied by evil fortune. No one spoke but the

inebriate grandsire; and the greater part of his discourse was an obscure cackle concerning a long-buried past; as though the venerable object of pity were surely a disreputable returned ghost, too unfragrant with cider for endurance in a better world.

The flotilla ascended the Mystic under a flag of truce, and was allowed to dump its cargoes of despair a mile or so below Medford. The family of offscourings above described began to beg the moment they were fairly on shore. The two elder women whined as though they had been born in mendicancy. The red-nosed pre-adamite halted before a sort of sutler shop, bared his snowy head to a couple of young louts, addressed them as his sons, and offered to dance for cider. The ashy-faced girl drew aside to munch her sea-biscuit without sharing it, and smirked equivocally at the bumpkins who were jeering her capering grandfather.

Only a few of the refugees were met and led away by friends; the others sat down on their soiled packs, or loitered vacantly up the Medford pike; it was an hour before the last one had thought of a possible refuge and mustered resolution to shamble towards it. The natives of the land, impoverished by the war and by previous swarms of starvelings, generally gave them nothing but a large abundance of room for passage.

Huldah, smiling to herself over some sweet expectation, had been the first to push on toward Medford. She had not floundered far along the sposhy road before she reached an outpost of the American picket-line. A sentry, a young man in a coarse blue uniform coat and tow-cloth breeches, one of the newly embodied "Continents," or regulars, stood on a bare knoll of

reeking turf by the wayside, his ragged cowhide shoes squelching snow-water, his chapped hands clasped around the muzzle of his firelock. He was leaning on the weapon in a violent fit of deep, hoarse coughing.

From head to foot this man showed nothing of the tidiness of the well-found, well-set-up British soldier. No stock; no ruffles to his wristbands; clothing stained with mud and flecked with the lint of his blanket; his cocked hat frayed at the edges and without rosette or other ornament; his blue yarn stockings torn to rags by briars. Probably he possessed neither overcoat, nor proper knapsack, nor haversack. It was certain that he had no cartridge-box; only a leathern bullet-pouch and a powder-horn. Yet he was a better-accoutred soldier than nine tenths of the long-suffering heroes who fought out the struggle for independence of that discordant, poverty-stricken league which we erroneously look back upon as a Federal Union.

Huldah confounded this simple-hearted belligerent, very likely the son of a country deacon or minister, whose mother wrote him godly counsel every time that she sent him a fresh pair of stockings, knitted by her own hands, or by those of his grandmother. As the girl passed him she nodded at him pertly, and showed the tip of her tongue between her lips. He bowed sheepishly, stared after her sheepishly when she had got quite by, and then leaned forward in another long fit of coughing.

A little beyond him was a shingle cabin, once the dwelling of a small farmer, but now used as a guard-house. Here were a dozen Continentals, some lounging about in the sludge, two sitting in the open doorway, others huddled around a fire within. Huldah

entered, and took a chair in one corner of the wide chimney-place, putting out her wet feet to the blaze and gazing composedly at the soldiers.

They were evidently abashed by the apparition of this stylishly-attired young lady, and it was not long before all the privates had risen and lumbered out of the room. Only the lantern-jawed sergeant held to his bench, and even he had an air of remaining on sufferance. "Putty muddy walking round these parts," he remarked, after clearing his throat apologetically.

"What is your name?" asked Huldah.

"Sly, ma'am; Abner Sly," he said, dropping his sandy lashes under her steady gaze. "Surgent in the Continentals," he added, trying not to show pride.

Huldah jumped up, giggled her way across the hearth, and seated herself beside him. This wonderful soldier started as if a siege-gun had been fired at him, and turned as red as fire to the downy edges of his wide-spreading ears.

"You don't know me," she continued to giggle.

"Seems to me I see you some'eres," he stammered, looking comically impatient to get away from her.

"Now let me tell you," she went on in a coaxing whisper. "I want to find my husband. He's a captain."

In great alarm Abner rose as expeditiously as he could without upsetting the bench and throwing her on the floor.

"His name is Moorcastle," said Huldah—"Captain Moorcastle. Do you know him?"

"No—reckon not," stammered Abner, who was most anxious to get shut of her, looking upon her as a

corpus delicti. " Guess you 'll find him down to Cambridge camp. It 's jam-full of captings."

Huldah smiled upon him in a fashion which made him blush again. Then she skipped out of the house and set off towards Medford, leaving him to patch up his shattered self-possession, and to try to recall where he had heard the name of Moorcastle.

Reaching the village, Huldah saw people running ahead of her, and was guided by them to the Common. There must be soldiers there, she felt sure; and she dearly loved soldiers for the sake of her captain. What she stumbled upon was one of those judicial tumults which were then so frequent in the malcontent provinces. At the foot of the tall liberty-pole, amid a town meeting of patriotic citizens, a jury of seven men was trying a Tory of the place for correspondence with the enemy. The court was of course not a legal one; it was exactly what we now know as a court of Judge Lynch; it was a systematic, orderly expression of popular wrath.

Huldah had squeezed her way into the centre of the throng just as the proceedings were terminating. The prisoner was a corpulent, broad-shouldered, burly man, with pendant but healthy-looking cheeks, and a beetling forehead. His hair was powdered and clubbed, his plum-colored coat was of good broadcloth, and he clearly belonged to the class of propertied men and electors.

But he had incurred the popular hatred, and there he stood awaiting sentence. It was tragical to watch the struggle which he made to keep his large lips from trembling, and to express defiance in the haggard eyes which he fixed upon his judges.

The sentence was tarring and feathering, to be followed by hoisting to the liberty-pole and expulsion from the township. A woeful spasm shook the fat Tory's double chin, and he cast a piteous glance around him upon the huzzahing multitude, as if longing to discover at least one compassionate face.

Preparations for the farcical execution were made with haste and glee. No one looked on with more interest than Huldah at the stirring of the warm tar and the evisceration of a venerable bolster. And when the shining stickiness descended upon the hair and flinching features and decent raiment of the victim, when the feathers followed it, and were dabbed on with eager hands till he was covered from top to toe with fleeciness; and when, thus scornfully disfigured, he was geared around his capacious waistband and hoisted twenty feet in air, his eyes starting from their sockets and his outspread hands clutching at naught, the poor, light-headed girl poured forth scream on scream of laughter, so shrill and wild that the noisiest louts there present faced about with open mouths to stare at her.

The sufferer returned to earth, gyrating slowly toward the several points of the compass, and landing upon all fours amidst the exulting spectators. He was unbound from the hoisting-rope, and allowed to scramble as he could to his feet. Every nerve in his body, every feature in his smirched visage quivered with fright and humiliation. His baggy and blood-shot eyes had lost every spark of defiance, or even of protest. Obviously he was completely cowed by the degrading punishment, and by the popular consensus which had driven it into his inmost soul.

Presently his gaze rested upon Huldah with a start

of surprise, followed by a spasm of humiliation. Then he lifted his twitching hands to his face, and burst into a loud fit of hoarse sobbing, like the gasping of a throttled beast. No wonder he was amazed, and wept. He was her uncle, Squire Hutchinson Oakbridge, her father's youngest brother, and her sponsor in baptism.

There was no chance for him to learn that this girl, whom he had held as a child upon his knee, and who was now laughing shrilly at his ignominious distress, did not know him. He was bundled into a cart, seated astride of an empty barrel, and driven toppling through the applauding village to be dumped beyond the frontiers of Medford. Huldah gave him a parting shriek of hilarity, and turned briskly about to look for soldiers.

There were few in Medford, but a little boy told her that she would find millions of them down Cambridge way.

"And General Washington, too!" he added, straightening up and breathing hard with pride—a forerunner of innumerable American youngsters who were to glory in the glorious name. Huldah asked him the road; and while he was pointing it out with his small red hand, she took his funny nose between two of her fingers; and they parted laughing loudly, the one as much an infant as the other.

She faced southward, and spattered on through the sludge with a subtle smile, happier no doubt than she had been for months, or perhaps in all her existence. Alas and alas for life as it is, or as it is but too often! This smiling girl would have wept bitterly had her reason been restored to her. As things were with her,

she was an object of pity all aglow with happiness, like so many another who passes for sane.

Erelong, after crossing the wooden bridge over Mystic River, she was among the earthworks of the American left wing. The redoubts of Plowed Hill lay on her left hand, and the great fortress of Winter Hill frowned on her right. From here on to Cambridge stretched more than two miles of curtains, bastions, batteries, and rifle-pits.

Soldiers of course abounded; Continentals in blue, and riflemen in hunting-shirts, and militiamen in citizen costume; some on guard, and some digging entrenchments, and some lounging. An elderly general, big, and broad-chested, and burly, his cheery brown face red with exercise and his boots daubed to the tops with mud, was actively directing the working parties. Another general, a tall and dignified man of about forty, watched the veteran with an approving smile, and said to him, "Sir, you have the art of inspiring men with your own zeal and energy."

Huldah did not know that one of these was Israel Putnam, and the other George Washington. Neither of them was Captain Moorcastle, and so she passed them with indifference, splashing on toward Cambridge.

There she met a man who recognized her, whether she knew him or not. In front of the house used as general headquarters Ash Farnlee was about to mount his horse and ride off on some duty. Their eyes met, and he stood for a moment paralyzed, his dark, ruddy face suddenly blanching. Huldah gave him one of those sweet and yearning smiles which she was now always ready to bestow upon any man who was anywhere near the age of Moorcastle.

He judged her at once; not caring how she came there; not knowing that she had lately sought his death; not so much as suspecting that she was insane; merely seeing, as he thought, that she craved a reconciliation; and denying it in anguish and anger. He gave her one glance, answered her smile with a spasmodic scowl, mounted his horse, and spurred away.

Huldah, rejected and scorned, understood nothing of it, and walked on with her dazed smile, looking for Moorcastle. Of the many soldiers whom she encountered, not one molested her or spoke to her. There was so little discipline among them that few ever saluted an officer. But such was American respect for womanhood, that this lonely girl could thread the swarming camps without insult, and even drunken men hushed their coarse bawling if they noted her approach.

A smell of cooked food drew her to enter the shanty of a sutler. She seated herself at his bare pine table, drummed with her fingers on a battered pewter plate, and called for English roast beef and plum pudding. The sutler grinned, for the chipper little man understood a joke when he heard a good one; and he promptly set before her a huge portion of baked pork and beans, flanked by a quart mug of cider. She ate heartily, though she made a comical wry face over the cider, and asked him if it was dry sherry. The sutler giggled civilly at her satire, and giggled cheerfully when she praised his plum pudding. It was a long time since he had seen a young lady who was so full of her fun.

But he turned solemn with astonishment when she drew forth a leathern purse, and emptying a quantity of guineas and shillings on the table, told him to help

himself. Not for months back, perhaps never in his life, had he seen so much specie together. He respectfully picked out a bright sixpence, and apologized for having no change; and when she walked away without taking the purse, he hurried after her and restored it. Her only response was to ask him where she could find her husband, Captain Moorcastle.

After a time the camps ended, and she walked through a deserted land. To her left was an arm of the sea, a coldly gleaming sheet of green water, bordered along its shores with gray ice. Wintry as it was, sending a chill to rational thought, it seemed to her a lovely spectacle. Beyond it, on that blue ocean which was its outer horizon, voyaged one who was dear—oh, so dear! She remembered it now; he had gone far away from her; he was on the Atlantic. Well, she would follow him; she would find a boat and get aboard a ship; she would overtake him somehow.

There was a cape far ahead of her, and she settled on that as the place where she must embark, for it was nearer the ocean than these inlet shores. A lagoon-like rivulet forced her to make a long detour, but she found a bridge and pushed on with insane persistence, threading devious by-paths and tramping through snowy commons. Yet the swiftly falling night of January was closing around her before she stood on the lonely strand of the cape.

A little later she was in an old canoe, paddling with her hands towards some lights in the harbor, the lanterns of the British ships of war.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

BOMBARDMENT

FOR weeks the Oakbridges did not hear a definite word concerning the fate of Huldah.

Mrs. Loreleigh, who was tenderly touched by the sad mystery, and also found it romantically entertaining, frequently dropped in with inquiries and suggestions. One morning (it was the memorable fifth of March) she sat in the Oakbridge parlor with Sister Ann, holding such discourse as human beings could hold under the circumstances, for the air was clamorous with an incessant cannonade, deafening the ears and shaking the nerves. There had been a great deal of this racket around Boston of late, and very few people had got comfortably wonted to it, so ill-fitted is mortal man to endure bombarding.

" You may depend she has followed him to England," said Mrs. Loreleigh. " My *gra-cious!* what a crash!" she interjected in a scream, clapping her hands to her ears. " Will they *never* get done? "

Sister Ann's soul, cased as it was in Anglo-Saxon beef, was as much shaken as Mrs. Loreleigh's. Nevertheless, she was able to remember what was being talked of, and to express her feelings concerning it with sufficient voice, however much her chin might quiver.

"He ain't wuth a dog's following him!" she bawled.
"I despise him—so beesly ongrateful! He ought to
be here, and tore to ribbings by these bumshells."

Mrs. Loreleigh could not sympathize thoroughly with this honest and fervent hatred of Moorcastle. No romantic castle-building hopes of hers had he ever demolished, nor ever broken the heart of one who was dear to her, as Huldah was dear to Ann. Moreover, it was not natural for her to permanently and vigorously take the part of her sex against the other.

At the same time, remembering the Captain's courtship of her married self, and shuddering in fear of death at the sound of every cannon, she could not help thinking of him as a rather bad man, and could not desire to defend him. It was more appropriate to the moment to talk of poor Huldah.

"I am sure I hope it will end well," she said. "But how will she get on over there? Is it true that she took with her a great deal of money?"

At this moment Jehiel Oakbridge entered the room; and, notwithstanding the iron uproar without, he caught the sense of the question; for Mrs. Loreleigh had put it forth in her most piercing soprano.

"Oh! not enough," he shouted, and then paused to utter a groan which no one heard but his Maker, so clamorously bellowed fleet and battery. "Not enough!" he repeated. "Why did n't she take more?—all there was! If we could only send it to her!"

He too believed that Huldah was in England, or at least somewhere in lands of the living. The fact of death—the death of his youngest and best-loved child—was inadmissible with him until it was indisputable.

And yet death was in the air that he breathed; it was not far from any one that morning in Boston, as well as in the American lines; his last words were drowned by the prolonged, deafening, savage crash of a thirteen-inch bomb.

"Mercy on us!" screamed Mrs. Loreleigh. "Those horrible creatures! Do they mean to murder us all?"

"It's just like Yankees—firing on women and children!" yelled Sister Ann, her under jaw shaking pitifully. "It stands one in hand to be prepared. If ever I prayed and besought for a clean heart, it was this very morning."

"Oh! I must get away," cried Mrs. Loreleigh, scared the more by this pious talk. "I came here for company, but it's more cheerful at home."

She had risen from her chair; but she sat down again, for just then Lieutenant Eastwold entered the room; and it seemed to her that there was some protection in the presence of a uniform.

The young man addressed himself to Oakbridge, with a touching expression of sympathy and grief.

"I have just had speech with an American prisoner," he said. "The man was on scouting duty at Dorchester Neck six weeks ago; and there they found on the shore a young lady who wore——"

He did not finish the sentence; his mouth quivered too violently. When he could speak again he gasped out, "They took this from her——"

Here he held up a little locket which they all recognized as Huldah's, a much-valued gift from her Uncle Hutchinson Oakbridge of Medford, now supposed to be a refugee at Halifax.

"They buried her there on the Neck," was his

next gasp; and then, clasping his hands over his face, he wept aloud.

The others wept with him, while the remorseless cannon bellowed as if in mockery, and the dwelling shook as if it would leave its foundations and flee for safety. Mrs. Oakbridge came in, and her husband cried the story into her ear, holding her up by one arm. Uncle Fenn followed, and listened to the tragedy from Sister Ann. The puritan mother seated herself quietly, shedding tears and trembling, but speechless. The nerves of the old man, shattered by days and nights of bombardment, went to piteous wreck.

"Oh Lord, this is more than we can bear," he whimpered. "Oh Lord, Thy hand is very heavy."

Mrs. Loreleigh wiped her eyes violently, and then clapped her fingers to her ears. "I shall just die of all this," she exclaimed petulantly. "That poor girl under all those cannon-balls! Do tell us, Mr. Eastwold! what *are* the ships about?"

He explained that they were still trying to drive the Americans from their new position on Dorchester Heights.

"Well, why don't they do it?" she demanded.
"Can't they?"

"Why, no—that is, not yet. Their works are extraordinarily strong. The General was perfectly amazed this morning. 'They have done more in one night,' said he, 'than my army would do in a month.' It's quite astonishing, Mistress Loreleigh, what they have thrown up."

"You'll see! they'll bust in here yet," groaned Sister Ann, who was beginning to hope they might, if that would stop the cannonade. "And then we'll

have to start for foring parts. Lud! what a tremble I 'm in! You might knock me down with a stror just as easy as not."

"They *can't* get in," shouted Uncle Fenn, temporarily forgetting Huldah in his loyalist rage. "They never can do it! Not while the earth stands! God won't permit it. And so"—turning to Eastwold with a chuckle—"so the ships are still peppering the rascals?"

There was no need to put it as a question, for all the men-of-war in South Bay, less than half a mile distant, were roaring together.

"Oh, how can I bear it!" cried Mrs. Oakbridge, starting up. "All those cruel shot falling on my child's grave!"

"And Huldah's grave is answering back," added Oakbridge. "It looks like a vengeance of Heaven."

The mother wrung her hands in horror, and then tottered out of the room, followed by her husband, who gasped, "Don't faint, Dorothy!—don'tee, now!"

"That 's an awful idear," groaned Ann. "But *she* won't faint; no indeed. It 'll be me first."

"They never can get in," Uncle Fenn continued to shout, as if trying to outbellow the broadsiding. "A just God won't permit it. He will rain hailstones and fire upon them. He will destroy them even as the Amorites."

"Oh, *what* is the use!" snapped Mrs. Loreleigh, thoroughly fretted by the old man's devout bravado, as scared people frequently are fretted when others do not sympathize with their terror. "If the rebels are to be allowed to keep Dorchester Neck, we had better ask them in here and have done with this."

"You don't mean it, madame!" protested the horrified parson.

But she jumped up, stuffed her fingers into her ears, crying, "*Mer-ky!* what a crash!" and dashed out of the house.

The reverberations of the shattered bomb ceased, and once more they could hear each other speak.

"That's a dreadful idear of father's," whimpered Ann. "Huldah's grave making war on us! I wish Capting Moorksle was here to be tore to ribbings."

Eastwold could endure no more of the doleful dialogue. He drew a long, shuddering sigh, clenched his finger-nails into his palms, and strode off to his duties. It is likely that, if at that moment he had encountered Moorcastle, nothing but death could have separated them.

"Lud! I did n't think of *him*, poor boy!" moaned Ann; but ere she could cry over him, she was frightened out of it by the cannon. The good-hearted creature was being whirled hither and thither by the scared egotism of the battle-field, one of the most distracting and hardening experiences possible to humanity.

We must explain that the military situation around Boston had reached a crisis. The American army, after more than ten months of cautious blockading, had become strong enough to risk decisive movements. His Excellency George Washington (little read of now in his own country, but there are five biographies of him in Japanese) had in hand seventeen thousand six hundred men, of whom ten thousand were Continentals, or regulars. Chief-of-Artillery Henry Knox had sledded on from New York fourteen mortars and forty heavy guns. In the Charles River lurked two floating

batteries and enough launches to transport thirty-six hundred men. Engineer Gridley had hundreds of fascines and bales of screwed hay for the filling of ditches, and the surgeon-general exulted over a treasure of salve, lint, and two thousand bandages.

Things being thus ready, why not bundle Howe into the sea? Congress recommended it; the thirteen colonies demanded it; Boston was the most eager of all. The exiled patriots of this heroic little city were willing and resolved to destroy its every dwelling, rather than let the enemies of English law and provincial liberties remain in it.

"May God crown your attempt with success," wrote Hancock to Washington. "I most heartily wish it, though I may be the greatest sufferer."

During his military career Washington made three strokes worthy of the greatest of captains. In the seizure of Dorchester Heights he anticipated the movement by which the youthful Bonaparte (if it were he) expelled the English from the harbor and fortress of Toulon. In the campaign of Trenton he anticipated, and victoriously, the vaunted march of Napoleon upon the rear of Schwartzenburg during the allied advance upon Paris. In the rapid and decisive concentration against Cornwallis at Yorktown he imitated the combination of Nero with Livius for the overthrow of Hasdrubal.

His present problem was to drive the English out of Boston by suddenly grasping and fortifying the hilly cape south of the harbor, known as Dorchester Neck. To mask this design, and draw the attention of Howe in another direction, there was a preliminary bombardment along the northwestern front of the British de-

fences; the batteries of Cobble Hill and Lechmere's Point and Lamb's Dam opening with thirteen-inch shell, eleven-inch shell, and solid shot ; while the redcoats responded from Fox Hill, Barton's Point, Bunker Hill, and their armed gondolas near the Causeway.

For three nights every rooftree and window within miles around shuddered and clattered in answer to the bellowing. In Boston, and Roxbury, and Cambridge people sat up till morning, or went to bed only to lie awake. " It was an amazing roar of cannon," wrote Mrs. John Adams to her husband ; " it was a continual roar of twenty-four-pounders and bursting shells."

Things went well for a time with " the red St. George's cannoneers." The Americans burst five of their venerable mortars, and their fire ran down on the third night to one hundred and fifty-seven shots, only thirteen of them bombs.

But during the night of March 4th two thousand Yankees, under Thomas, threw up on Dorchester Heights such a vast line of entrenchments that when General Howe looked at it in the morning, he thought he must be still asleep and suffering with nightmare. As soon as he came to himself he dictated a letter concerning it to the Secretary for Colonial Affairs. " It must have been," he said, " the work of twelve thousand men."

Meantime Admiral Shuldham had opened fiercely on Thomas; and the entire semicircle of American artillery was hurling shot and shell all over the Shawmut peninsula; while the British land batteries, from the Barrier round to Bunker Hill, roared, and screeched, and banged in reply. For hours during that wild

March morning Boston was rolled in smoke, and tremulous with shouting cannon and bursting bombs. No wonder that the sorrowing Oakbridges could hardly hear each other's mourning for Huldah.

Howe was as good a general as an extremely slow and pacific armadillo can be. That he must have Dorchester Heights, or else abandon Boston, was as clear to him as it would have been to Napoleon. He ordered Earl Percy to cross the Bay during the evening with twenty-five hundred troops, and storm the American works under cover of darkness.

But Washington, who had of course foreseen this movement, was prepared both to confront it and to take advantage of it. The entrenching division under Thomas was re-enforced and furnished with cannon. On the other side of the city two columns of two thousand men each, under Sullivan and Greene, with Putnam in general command, were to land at the Common and Barton's Point, while a third column threatened the Barrier.

It was a difficult enterprise; and probably fortune favored the Americans in not permitting them to attempt it; for the English chief had in hand eleven thousand soldiers and sailors with hundreds of cannon.

But the green warriors in the miles of besieging lines were full of zeal and of confidence in their commander. Everybody was repeating and commending to everybody else his Excellency's famous instructions, still worthy of being remembered:

" If any man skulks, or presumes to retreat without orders, he must be shot down at once. Cowards have often disconcerted the brave, and must be treated as public enemies."

But when evening came, it brought with it a furious storm of wind, which rendered the embarkation of Percy's column impossible, and the American assault on Boston unnecessary.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A KISS FOR EASTWOLD

NO mere storm of wind could prevent Uncle Fenn from carrying on the war with that implacable rage which characterizes the non-combatant. He and his God (for he talked as though he had one of his own) routed the Yankees, in anticipation, all that evening.

"We shall soon hear of the scoundrels being dispersed to the four winds," he said to his mourning brother and sister-in-law, with a chuckle which seemed to them cruel, and to himself righteous. "By sunrise to-morrow there won't be living rebels enough on Dorchester Heights to rob a hen-roost."

In the morning, when he found that Percy's enterprise had been delayed by the tempest, he maintained the same exasperating confidence. "All the better!" he affirmed. "The British bayonet does its duty best by daylight. The works of godliness stand in no need of darkness."

Meantime he was in a state of nervous agitation which threatened acute illness, or even loss of reason. The cannonade and the lack of sufficient sleep had broken down his strength and self-command. He was ghastly pale; his flabby cheeks and double chin all a-quiver; his voice husky and by times extinct. The truth is that the shelling had scared him, though in the

very height of the uproar, and when he was shaking with dread of death or laceration, he would not own it.

"I am ready," he would stammer. "I am supported wonderfully."

Percy never attacked Dorchester Heights, for the wind blew furiously all the 6th of March, and by dawn of the 7th the American entrenchments had become formidably strong. Even the leading Tories, such as Judge Oliver and Timothy Ruggles, who were more anxious for battle than the English themselves, began to mutter, "It is too late."

"Never!" insisted Parson Fenn. "The eleventh hour is as good as the first, if the Most High so wills it; and surely He must will it now in the precious cause of His anointed."

But it was not long before Mrs. Loreleigh dropped in upon the Oakbridges with the news that General Howe had lost all hope of storming Dorchester, and was preparing to abandon Boston.

"It is false!" shouted Uncle Fenn. "He dare not abandon this city! His king has commanded him to stay here and hold it."

He fairly frightened the petted beauty out of her temper and toppingness. She could only gasp meekly, "But the Admiral, reverend sir! The Admiral says they can sink him at his anchors. He says he *must* go."

The parson was about to quote Scripture to the contrary, when Lieutenant Eastwold arrived breathless, and corroborated Mrs. Loreleigh's tidings.

"I thought I would warn you at once," he said to the Oakbridges. "There will be a wonderful rush to get out of the city. If you decide to leave, let me

know as early as possible, and I 'll try to secure a place on a transport for you."

"Where are we all to go?" demanded Mrs. Loreleigh.

"Halifax," he shouted as he hastened away.

Mrs. Loreleigh dropped back in her chair, and blew out her lips with a little pettish breath, like a smoker throwing off a puff of smoke. The entire gesture was equivalent to saying, "Not I!"

"I 'll go, I 'll go," babbled Uncle Fenn in a quavering stammer. "And you 'll go too, Jehiel. We 'll all go. We can pray for our king there. Where is Huldah? Oh, dear! I forgot. I must pack my own trunk now. I 'll begin to pack at once. The king's business requires haste."

But before night he took to his bed, a sadly ailing and fretful old man, an image of the loyalist party in the thirteen provinces, death-stricken though full of faith and spite. Sometimes he quarrelled with his brother and sister-in-law because they would not pack for Halifax, charging upon them that they were holding back a part of their duty to the Lord's anointed, and calling them Ananias and Sapphira. Sometimes he declared that he himself would not quit Boston.

"I will stay and defy the wretches," he whimpered. "I will get out of bed and fight them myself. In the strength of the Lord will I arise to do battle."

Then again he was full of hope that all would yet go well for the king's party in Massachusetts. "The cannonade has stopped," he exclaimed joyfully. "The enemies of law have been put to flight."

"No, Brother Timothy," explained Jehiel. "But there has been a kind of understanding brought about,

whereby Sir William will spare the town if Washington will let him depart in peace."

"Let him burn it!" cried Uncle Fenn. "I'd rather see it a desolation than see it in the hands of rebels."

"It's not fur from a ruin now. Come, Timothy, don't be so excited and feverish about things. Let wife bring you a bowl of gruel; and do try to get something down."

"No, don't call her! *You* stay with me, Jehiel. She—she troubles me; I know her heart is n't right. Oh, she means well; she's a good woman; she'll go to heaven. But her heart is with this rebellion, and it troubles me to look at her."

It seemed to Jehiel that his brother was pretty nearly insane; but he made no other reply than to rub his hands and smile pitifully.

"If Huldah was only here!" wailed Uncle Fenn; and then they both broke out in violent sobbing.

"She'd 'a' been here and happy, if it had n't been for that British officer," said Jehiel at last.

The sick man moaned piteously, and tried to pat his brother's shoulder. "Don't talk about it," he whispered. "Oh dear, oh dear! The Lord help us! The Lord have mercy upon us, poor short-sighted creatures!"

So loyal was he to everything English that he could not even be bitter against Moorcastle. Indeed, it is questionable whether he did not admire that high-born redcoat the more for the easy arrogance with which he had burst in upon the self-respect of the Oakbridges, and the half-unconscious ruthlessness with which he had trampled on their happiness. Was it not the

privilege and distinguishing mark of a British gentleman to ride at will athwart the harvests of plebeians? Was it not an honor to the plebeians themselves that their humble domains should be thus nobly hunted over?

Eastwold the clergyman regarded as a far inferior person to Moorcastle. "Good little fellow," he said of him to Mrs. Oakbridge, junior. "Of course I respect him for his cloth; a king's officer is a king's officer. But he is no such man as the other; the blood is n't there."

Even cockney Sister Ann, deeply as she reverenced crown and coronets, resented this scorn of a noble-hearted youngster merely because he was a commoner.

"Eastwold's father was a draper, to be sure," she admitted. "But all the same I'm thinking that, if all his Majesty's officers in the colonies had been like him, there'd never been no rebellion."

Uncle Fenn made no reply. He felt too weak to argue; and then what was the use? Poor Ann had been brought up a dissenter, and so had a natural leaning toward plebeianism, as well as a hopeless defectiveness in the reasoning powers.

"Father and Mother Oakbridge just wusship him," she continued. "Mother Oakbridge can't talk of him without the tears drowning her eyes. Of course it's partly on Huldah's account; but partly too it's on his'n. He's clean won their broken 'earts with his respect for them and his sorrowing over poor sister."

"Yes, he's a good boy," conceded Uncle Fenn, melting a little toward the gentle-hearted youth. "May the Lord bless him and console him."

"We 'd 'a' had the shop robbed this morning but for him hap'ning by," resumed Ann. "I *will* say the conduck of some of the soldiers is just shameful. They find rum somehow, and then they get as wild as savages. A gang bust in upon John, bawling, ' 'Ell or 'Alifax!' They made believe they wanted him to pack up and go aboard a transport. But all they were after was the key of the spirit cubbard. John gave it up; you know how easy frightened he is; but just then Mr. Eastwold huv in sight, and the soldiers run for it. Oh, they were n't so groggy but they could remember what it is to get three hundred."

She gave no exaggerated impression of the evil condition of Boston. For ten days the beleaguered and bombarded town was insulted and plundered by its nominal protectors. Crean Brush's Loyal Americans (nearly all born in the old country) looted and wasted like a gang of buccaneers. The rabble of spiteful loyalist refugees from the country districts was as ungovernable and noxious as the drunken stragglers from the barracks.

It was impossible for the humane and well-meaning Howe to preserve order. All the men not on guard, or on their one day off duty, were engaged in embarking the hundreds of cannon and the endless masses of army stores, or in destroying what could not be carried away. Swarms of bluejackets were ashore, sweating at the same labor while they were watched, but truanting when they could. More than a thousand Tories and several hundred officers were getting their luggage into the transports. Houses, magazines, and the very streets were littered with furniture and other property which the owners could neither remove nor guard. In

such a city of confusion, how could riot and plunder be prevented?

Mrs. Loreleigh, a coquette in loyalism as in love, rapidly lost patience with this style of garrisoning, and began to wish that Howe would be off with himself and his roysters.

"Why don't he go—or else fight!" she exclaimed in the very presence of Uncle Fenn. "I am sick of such generalship—living on the forbearance of Mr. Washington—keeping the town topsy-turvy for weeks—no safety in the streets, nor scarcely in bed—no society, nor amusement, nor hope of any—no chance of staying and yet won't go! The king seems to be about as badly off for generals as Boston women are for beaux. I begin to think that Mr. Washington will be king of these colonies before five years are over."

Uncle Fenn solemnly arose on one elbow, and rolling two bloodshot eyes at Mrs. Loreleigh, intoned, "Oh, thou of little faith——"

But he was interrupted by the sound of hasty steps, followed by the appearance of Eastwold in the doorway, pallid with toil and watching. "I wanted to say," stammered the young man, "the town is in such a riotous state! If you were on one of the transports I should feel easier."

Then the mother of Huldah announced her resolution. She took Eastwold by the shoulders and kissed his haggard cheek fervently. "I love you dearly," she sobbed. "May God go with you! But I can't leave my country. I can't sail away from *her* grave."

Uncle Fenn turned his face to the wall and tried to die. But he could not—poor man!—not yet.

CHAPTER XL

TO HALIFAX OR —— !

SIR WILLIAM HOWE prolonged the agony of Boston and of Uncle Fenn for twelve days.

He hoped every morning that on the morrow reinforcements might arrive which would enable him to bayonet Washington out of Dorchester; and, if he must depart, he wanted to save England's honor and his own by carrying off every cannon, every ton of army stores, and every hulk in the harbor.

Uncle Fenn grew hopeful; he prayed a great deal, and he trusted that his prayers were heard, as indeed they were in the next room; he became so hopeful and cheerful that he began to rally in health. But unluckily for him, Washington lost patience with the Britannic armadillo, and undertook to quicken his movements by seizing the extreme nose of Dorchester Neck, less than eighty rods from southwestern Boston.

As it was still only March 10th, and the evenings were chilly, some of the raw soldiers of the expedition kindled a fire. The unlucky blaze startled Admiral Shuldham into broadsiding; whereupon the vast crescent of American batteries responded, and the English batteries rejoined; so that a hundred or more of bellowing fire-spouts raged for ten hours around Boston. The upshot of this artillery duel was that the Yankees had to give up Nook's Hill for the present.

Every shot of that cannonade looked up Uncle Fenn in his sick-room. He jumped, and groaned, and prayed all night, as very likely did every other ailing person in the city, and not a few who were well. So pitiable was his condition in the morning that Mrs. Oakbridge told him of the British triumph, and even magnified it a kindly little, to save his life. The tidings worked like a charm, so potent is the spirit over the body. He sat up in bed to eat his breakfast, and exulted like a monster over his patient nurse.

"I think I shall get well now," he chuckled. "Such news as that every day would make a hearty man of me. I presume they killed hundreds of them."

Poor Mrs. Oakbridge, ghastly from watching over him half the night, winced under the outburst of Tory gratulation which she had aroused. It was a great relief to have Doctor Lloyd come in, so that she could escape for a while from this terrible object of compassion.

The doctor was a stout, blond, rosy man of fifty, who had the kindest, jolliest smile in the world, and who could soothingly assent to every sort of sick-bed gabble. Many a languishing creature had been saved by his faculty for listening and smiling and nodding. He did not believe at this moment that his patient would live a week; and yet he had the air of regarding him as a man who was merely a bit out of sorts. Uncle Fenn, on his part, forgot to ask how his pulse counted, and could hardly spare time to stick out his tongue, so eager was he to talk of the British victory.

"One more such, and we 'll finish 'em," he exulted in a hasty stutter, not easy to understand. "Dear me, what chance have they against us? Madness has

possessed their souls, or they would beseech the king's grace this very day. Was there ever such a pitiful rebellion against such a mighty power? New England stands alone in it. New York, and New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are as loyal as you and I, Doctor. Our Southern brethren have n't sent a thousand men to help their Excellency Washington. Oh, the lunacy of these four penniless provinces defying the mother country! The Most High laughs them to scorn. He has demented them, and He will destroy them."

For many minutes the doctor smilingly listened, meekly nodding assent to every sentence, and softly stroking the invalid's quivering hand. After a while there came a yawn; little by little the torrent of words subsided into a somnolent muttering; and at last the poor old incarnation of perishing loyalism fell into a nervous, twitching slumber.

For five days Boston and Uncle Fenn lay in a kind of lethargy. The batteries on both sides slept; the English scuttled ships which they could not man, and broke up cannon which they could not carry off; the drunken soldiers and Crean Brush's filibusters were kept by some kind providence from the Oakbridge dwelling. During this period it was settled that John Oakbridge and his wife should emigrate to Halifax.

"To have a foot in each boot, father," explained the son. "You stay here and make it smooth with the rebels, while I keep in with the old government. Ann says it 's the *only* sensible way; and she a born Londoner, you know."

Oakbridge senior assented to the double-headed arrangement with a blush of shame. Such political balancings and seesawings—tremulous "family devo-

tions" on the good-Lord-good-Devil basis—were as common in our first civil war as they were in our last. On the 16th of March Washington got out of patience anew with the British armadillo. During the evening of that day he seized Nook's Hill for good, in spite of Admiral Shuldham's broadsiding arguments and remonstrances. Of course all the confronting batteries awoke and thundered around the city of desolation. Not a soul in Boston slept that night, except the stone-blind drunkards who lay in the gutters, and the hardened artillerists who could snore alongside of the jumping guns.

Lethargy and laudanum together could not tranquilize the broken old man in the Oakbridge house. He tossed, he rolled from side to side, he moaned and babbled, while the cannonade lasted. Mrs. Oakbridge and Doctor Lloyd held him and soothed him till they were white with exhaustion. Then Jehiel and Sister Ann took their places, and continued the battle with death.

"How terrible he is!" gasped Mrs. Oakbridge the moment she had got out of the room.

"He dies like an empire in convulsions," murmured the doctor, wiping the sweat from his face with a large red handkerchief, such as gentlemen carried in that age of snuff-taking.

Mrs. Oakbridge pressed her finger-nails into her palms, in terror lest she should be glad that the great Deliverer was approaching.

The morning brought quiet to the sick man and the tormented city. Howe had at last given up the struggle to hold an untenable position; and the preparations for departure were openly pushed with all possible

alacrity. The Americans, discerning that an embarkation had commenced, ceased firing; and the English, well pleased to be let alone, began to haul off their land batteries. The revolutionary cannonadings of Boston had ended, never to be renewed.

"There!" said Uncle Fenn, with the shuddering gasp of a man who breaks free from a nightmare.

"We have silenced them again. I knew we should."

A smile of joy played over his dropsical face, streaked with flushes of fever and quivering in every fibre.

"I knew we should beat," he repeated. "It's dreadful to bear. But I suffer all things gladly for my king's sake. Thanks be to God who hath given him the victory!"

He felt so much restored that he insisted upon putting on his dressing-gown, and could hardly be persuaded out of a purpose to get up and sit at a front window. He wanted, he said, to wave his handkerchief to the gallant fellows who had given the rebels another good thrashing.

No one was cruel enough to contradict these happy delusions. Doctor Lloyd simply advised a few more hours in bed, with a continuance of the camomile tea, and then smilingly shuffled away.

An hour later Uncle Fenn was asleep, undisturbed by the trampling of troops, the rolling of gun-carriages, the hurrying and calling of refugees, the clamor of a city voiding its inhabitants. John Oakbridge and wife departed without other farewell than to look in upon the slumbering old man, his lower jaw dropped, his breathing stertorous, his swollen fingers twitching as if to clutch at departing life. Eastwold, ghastly with two weeks of toil and broken sleep, merely rode

up to the house on his foaming horse, shook hands over the gate with Huldah's father and mother, and dashed off at a gallop.

Hour by hour Boston became less populous and more tranquil. By early afternoon there was not a redcoat nor a bluejacket to be seen throughout the whole of Shawmut peninsula. But there was still inhabitation; there still remained some four thousand of the once present and prosperous sixteen thousand citizens; and although they were mostly impoverished, if not even ragged and hungry, they wore countenances of joy. They did not hurrah; for the lobsters might yet return, and the tarpaulins were still within cannon-shot; but they shook hands, and laughed, and sometimes danced at each other. One tattered old man capered alone past the Oakbridge house in such frantic fashion that even Huldah's mother could not repress a smile.

Later she fell a-doze with weariness in the room of the slumbering invalid. A noise of gladness awoke her; she heard a far-off thrumming of drums and screaming of fifes; she ran to a window, and saw Mrs. Loreleigh in her carriage waving a white handkerchief up the street; and looking in that direction, she discovered that the late leader of Tory fashion was welcoming the oncoming column of Continentals. Next the shout of a delivered people poured into the house: " Hurrah for Washington! hurrah for liberty! hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!"

The dying old loyalist awoke and seemed to comprehend the situation at once.

" The rebels? " he demanded of his brother, who had just entered the room.

"Yes, Timothy," answered Oakbridge, too wild with joy to be considerate.

"Help me up!" shouted the crazed old man. "I will do battle with them myself."

He floundered to his feet, tottered half-way to the window, and fell with an inarticulate bellow. They got him back to bed, but he had time to draw only one fierce gasp for life, and then his combats were over.

The Oakbridges were so busy with the poor old Tory body of death that they missed seeing Major Asahel Farnlee ride past on the staff of His Excellency, his black eyes sparkling and his dark aquiline face flushed with triumph, an incarnation of the coming republic.

SEQUEL

Vainly Sir William was bounced out of the harbor of Boston ;

Vainly Sir John, and the Earl, and Tarleton blundered and failed ;

Fruitless the footprints of blood of famishing, brave Continentals ;

Uselessly Washington planned and navies of Gallia sailed.

Colonists yet we remain, getting our raiment from Lunnun,
Turning our trouserings up when it rains in the mother-
land ;

And every millionaire bud grown between Gotham and
'Frisco

Dreams of a peer of the realm too poor to refuse her his
hand.

Colonists yet we remain, doubting ourselves and each
other—

Yankeedom's artists abide in shadow till Britons have
praised ;

Yankeedom's authors in vain aspire to the title of genius—
Eagle of freedom ! your bolts fruitlessly hurtled and
blazed.

Tremulous eagle ! uplift boldly to lion and unicorn
Clamor of challenge, a yawp, claiming your soul as your
own !

Sire of the stratified pants and galaxied azure swallow-tail,
Rise and declare what you like, nor care if you like it
alone !

fc







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